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Abbreviations

Gregory's Works

Cant.	*In canticum canticorum*
Dial.	*Dialogues*
Ep.	*Registrum epistolarum*
Hom.Ev.	*Homiliae in Evangelia*
Hom.Ez.	*Homiliae in Ezechielem*
Mor.	*Moralia in Iob*
Reg.	*In I Lib. Regum*
RP	*Regula pastoralis*

Other Abbreviations

ACO	*Acta conciliorum oecumenicorum*
CCCM	*Corpus Christianorum continuatio medievalis*
CCSL	*Corpus Christianorum series latina*
CollCist	*Collectanea cisterciensia*
CNRS	Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique
CSEL	*Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum latinorum*
DSp	*Dictionnaire de spiritualité*
Ep.	*Epistola*
GCS	*Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller*
HTR	*Harvard Theological Review*
JEH	*Journal of Ecclesiastical History*
JThS	*Journal of Theological Studies*
Mansi	*Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio*
MGH	*Monumenta Germaniae historica*
PG	*Patrologia graeca*
PL	*Patrologia latina*
RechA	*Recherches augustiniennes*

RechSR	*Recherches de science religieuses*
RHE	*Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique*
RTAM	*Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale*
RvBén	*Revue bénédictine*
RvEAnc	*Revue des études anciennes*
RvEAug	*Revue des études augustiniennes*
SC	*Sources chrétiennes*
StudMon	*Studia monastica*
TR	*Theologische Revue*

Short Titles of Frequently Cited Works

Butler, *Western Mysticism* Cuthbert Butler, *Western Mysticism: The Teaching of Augustine, Gregory, and Bernard on Contemplation and the Contemplative Life.* 2nd ed. New York: Harper and Row, 1966.

Courcelle, *Lettres* Pierre Courcelle, *Les lettres grecques en Occident.* Paris: Hachette, 1948.

Dagens, *Grégoire* Claude Dagens, *Saint Grégoire le Grand: Culture et expérience chrétiennes.* Paris: Etudes Augustiniennes, 1977.

Dudden, *Gregory* F. Homes Dudden, *Gregory the Great: His Place in History and Thought.* 2 vols. London: Longmans, Green, 1905.

Fontaine et al., *Grégoire* J. Fontaine, R. Gillet, and S. Pellistrandi, eds., *Grégoire le Grand.* Paris: CNRS, 1986.

Markus, *End* Robert A. Markus, *The End of Ancient Christianity.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

Matter, *Voice* E. Ann Matter, *The Voice of My Beloved: The Song of Songs in Western Medieval Christianity.* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990.

Meyvaert, *Benedict* Paul Meyvaert, *Benedict, Gregory, Bede and Others.* London: Variorum Reprints, 1977.

Richards, *Consul* Jeffrey Richards, *Consul of God: The Life and Times of Gregory the Great.* London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980.

Straw, *Gregory* Carole Straw, *Gregory the Great: Perfection in Imperfection.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988.

Preface

With this volume, the reader is welcomed as an honored participant in the deliberations of a symposium on Gregory the Great, held on the campus of the University of Notre Dame in March 1993, occasioned by Robert Markus's tenure as visiting professor in the Department of Theology for the spring of 1993. Anticipating that Markus's seminar on Gregory would become a focal point of discussion among students and faculty in theology and related disciplines, we began even before his arrival to plan for a small gathering of North American scholars working on Gregory to complement and supplement our internal exchanges. The result was a cordial synergy of forces, a weekend of overlapping conversations sparked by the formal presentations of invited speakers and continuing informally into the breaks between sessions, and, as befits a symposium, over lunch and dinner as well.

The papers presented in this volume are arranged in the order in which they were delivered at the symposium, with the addition of several related contributions. In these presentations Gregory emerges as a figure both interpreting and interpreted: interpreting the past; receiving, synthesizing, and developing the teachings of earlier writers; and by this process presenting a persuasive theological and pastoral agenda which itself inspired on-going projects of interpretation and development in later periods, up to and including our own. In this respect Robert Markus's paper sets the tone by showing how the "inner life of a Gregorian topos," once revealed, allows us a way of articulating the profound but elusive difference between two intellectual worlds, that of Augustine and that of Gregory, both of which seem so similar—so "Augustinian"—on the exterior.

Carole Straw continues the exposition of the relationship between Gregory and his cultural forebears by focusing a lively discussion on the topic of death and mortality, demonstrating how Gregory reworked themes from both pagan and Christian sources into a unique synthesis firmly anchored in the pastoral concerns of his own day. Conrad Leyser then takes up the question of Gregory's relationship to his ascetic sources, revealing in a way the *exterior* life of a Gregorian topos. He shows how Gregory's constant complaint that administration has usurped contemplation in his life, and his corresponding advice on the necessity of tempering ascetic expertise with the practice of charity, has deep roots in Augustine and Cassian—but precisely as interpreted and developed from Gregory's position as an ascetic with an embattled hold on the papacy, traditionally a stronghold of the nonascetic Roman clerical establishment. James J. O'Donnell, for his part, shows us how a contemporary, non-Gregorian topos of interpretation, that of "the holy," has not always served us well as an instrument of understanding Gregory or other ancient ascetics. In Gregory's case, use of a preconstructed category has obscured how he self-consciouly defied topoi of the rarity of holiness or of its narrow localization in special persons or things. A new appreciation of Gregory's "greatness" (perhaps the most uncannily enduring Gregorian topos of all), would involve our willingness to reexamine the indebtedness of modern analytical categories to the topoi that Gregory would subvert.

The next paper, by Rodrigue Bélanger, is a treat for those weary of clichés about Gregory's lack of doctrinal innovation, for it shows Gregory at work in a dialectic of his own, appropriating and developing the christology of Augustine and Leo by giving it special and crucial links to his own exegetical theory and practice. Paul Meyvaert then takes up the issue of Gregory's connection not to the Fathers in general, but to his immediate predeccesor, conclusively demonstrating Gregory's authorship of an important letter on the Three Chapters controversy traditionally ascribed to Pope Pelagius II. Meyvaert, who was invited to the symposium but was unable to attend, also kindly contributed a translation of an important article on Gregory's knowledge of Greek, hitherto available only in the original Dutch, by G. J. M. Bartelink. Bartelink settles the question of Gregory's knowledge of Greek beyond a reasonable doubt, arguing that Gregory, despite his stay in Constantinople, had only the

most elementary school knowledge of Greek, certainly inadequate for reading any Greek theologian in the original and probably inadequate even for elementary work with Greek manuscripts of the Bible. Meyvaert adds an appendix of his own on Gregory's knowledge of astronomy, paying particular attention to the Greek terminology involved.

Turning to matters of exegesis and spirituality, Bernard McGinn shows how Gregory gathers, under the golden light of a theory of salvation history, strands of contemplative theory present in his predecessors but never integrated into a consistent theory and praxis. Grover Zinn, Jr. provides a characterization of Gregory's exegesis, encouraging us to resist the temptation to remove the "jewel" of spiritual or doctrinal teaching from its exegetical "setting," and thus inviting us to ponder the complex logic holding the jewel to its setting. His valuable observations prompt us to notice how many of Gregory's interpreters, not only modern but also medieval, have failed to keep jewel and setting intact, and thus our attention is directed to the final two contributions of this volume, both of which deal with Gregory's fate and influence among medieval interpreters. Celia Chazelle paints a detailed and nuanced picture of Gregory's influence on medieval doctrines of the artistic image, showing how these were neither monolithic nor in any simple way "Gregorian," but were in each case creative interpretive readings of Gregory shaded with pseudo-Gregorian sources (themselves, in fact, creative claims upon Gregory). Finally, E. Ann Matter offers us an extraordinary view of what may have been Gregory's most influential presence in the twelfth century, namely, his appearance as an authority in the *Glossa Ordinaria.* The Gregory who appears in the *Glossa* is not only a selected—and thus interpreted—Gregory, but one selected from a tradition of selection, most notably the compilation and codification of Gregory's exegesis done by his secretary Paterius. The "glossed" Gregory thus represents the use and continuation of "an established tradition of excerpting and revising Gregory that reached a climax in the twelfth century"—but one that, if the aspirations for a volume such as this are realized, is continuing still.

Before turning to the papers themselves, it would be remiss not to pause to thank all those whose support made the symposium possible and whose assistance made it so pleasant and seemingly effortless. Lawrence Cunningham, chair of the Department of

Theology, and John Van Engen, director of the Medieval Institute, cosponsored the symposium; support was also provided by Notre Dame's Institute for Scholarship in the Liberal Arts and its director, Jennifer Warlick. Nancy Cavadini planned and executed a sumptuous reception in the Great Hall of the Peace Center, while John Van Engen welcomed the symposium to the Medieval Institute for a cordial reception on the following day. Darlene Flaming, Susan Graham, John Houghton, Andrew McGowan, Catherine Murphy, and Thomas Ryan provided excellent logistical support of various kinds. Thanks, too, to David Lot for his beautiful poster and program, and to Blake Leyerle, Michael Signer, and Randall Zachman, who chaired the various sessions of the conference. Darlene Flaming provided invaluable and expert assistance in editing the papers. Finally, thanks are due to Ann Rice, executive editor of University of Notre Dame Press; to Dr. Lys Ann Shore, for her expert copyediting of a complicated and rather unwieldy manuscript; to Marge Gloster, for her assistance with graphics; and to Jeannette Morgenroth for her excellent work on internal design.

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ROBERT A. MARKUS

The Jew as a Hermeneutic Device: The Inner Life of a Gregorian Topos

La nature est un temple où de vivants piliers
Laissent parfois sortir de confuses paroles;
L'homme y passe à travers des forêts de symboles

Baudelaire

"It often happens that some half-baked thought of ours, not properly worked out, is quickly discredited by the opposition it encounters when it is prematurely paraded in public, and so, in trying to take shape too precipitately, it brings about its own demise."[1] I take this warning from Gregory's *Moralia* very much to heart in offering this paper. It is tentative, and intended as a signpost indicating the direction that further work might usefully take. I want to look at one of those topoi in the Gregorian corpus that anyone who has so much as dipped into it will find familiar, even overfamiliar, for it is not only common in Gregory but also has a very respectable patristic ancestry. So let me begin by quoting one of its many occurrences in Gregory's writings, chosen almost at random:

> What does the holy Scripture daily bring home [insinuat] to the Jewish people but the darkness they are plunged into by their error? For [the Scripture] does not so proclaim the Redeemer by means of hidden and spiritual meanings [intellectus] that His incarnation, birth, passion, resurrection and ascension to heaven are not clearly shown. Nor are they so unreasonable [irrationabiles] that they cannot see that such excellent things befit the Redeemer; but they are blind, in that although they hear of the signs which blazed forth to announce the Redeemer to their

> fathers, they nevertheless do not believe their reality to have come about [esse non credant]. Thus they are blind not by failing to see what has been promised, but by not believing in its realization [non credendo exhibita].[2]

Or, as Gregory puts it more succinctly a few paragraphs further on, speaking of the priest Heli, though they have "the letter of the law," they do not have "the state of illumination but the affliction of blindness [non . . . statum luminis sed lapsum caecitatis]."[3] With all this we are, alas, only too well acquainted. The outward career of this patristic topos has, over the centuries, made a heavy contribution to the sinister stereotyping of the Jew in Christian literature. But here I shall consider not its outward, historical career but its inner life in Gregory's own imagination. So let us try to subject it to the treatment recommended by Peter Brown and strip off the patina of the obvious that encrusts human thoughts and actions.[4] Carole Straw has done so much to make Gregory far more surprising and interesting than we ever imagined, stripped away so much of the patina that the centuries have deposited on his thought,[5] that I hesitate in trying to chip away a bit more. But Gregory's Jew is, I think, still rather heavily encrusted. So I will try to tease out his inner life from Gregory's writings.

Scripture as a Forest of Symbols

In speaking of Gregory's Jew, I want to be clearly understood to have in mind the Jew in his writings, above all in his homilies concerned with the exegesis of biblical texts, rather than the Jew in the synagogues of Italian towns or on church lands, about whom he sometimes writes to his agents or to other bishops. The two belong to different worlds: one to the world of the still highly mixed urban and rural society of the sixth century, the other to the world of discourse of a long exegetical tradition. It is this second world I shall be concerned with, but first let me qualify the sharp distinction I have just made, and note that the two worlds do in fact overlap. To take one rather commonplace example: when Gregory is writing to the bishop of Naples to advise him how to deal with the Jews in his city, he tells the bishop, among other things, that when attempts are made at proselytism, he should seek to

convert Jews using their own books to prove to them what he is saying.[6] There is a whole hermeneutic tradition behind this very practical advice, precisely the sort of discourse I am concerned with; this should warn us against too sharp a division between discourse and praxis.

The tradition is most fully articulated in Augustine's *De doctrina christiana.* Several of the papers given at the memorable colloquium on that book held at the University of Notre Dame in 1991[7] fastened onto this very point; thus I should perhaps begin with a brief reminder. Such a reminder will also serve as a pointer to the very obvious fact that Gregory's thought moves within a thoroughly Augustinian groove. For Augustine the freedom of a Christian is the capacity to see things in their true significance. To remain confined within the range of signs (or, more precisely, of the *res* that act as signs of further *res*) without understanding their further meaning Augustine considers a form of "miserable slavery of the soul."[8] This slavery is a refusal to look beyond the immediate, the given, the first meaning of the sign; it is a refusal of transcendence, of seeking the meaning of its meaning. It amounts to foreclosing on the possibility of seeing a significance beyond the immediately signified, of openness to a further reality signified by the referent in its turn being taken as signifier.[9] Jew and Gentile are equally subject to this slavery, equally capable of being delivered from it.

What distinguishes the Christian from the Jewish community is an openness to the New Testament context within which the things spoken of in the Old Testament receive a further meaning. Lack of it is what Augustine calls the "servitude" of the Jewish people. This servitude keeps the Jews confined within the world of the Old Testament's signs taken as the ultimate *res,* incapable of further signification. Even so, Augustine will assert, this servitude was profitable for the Jewish people, for they were obeying God, while the bondage of the Gentiles who remained confined to the world of created things could only remain sterile. But after the advent of Christ, the Jews remained stuck among the things that now were to be seen from another perspective, as signs of new realities. This was a premature closure of their biblical discourse, short of the new realm of meaning it would enter in the light of the Incarnation.[10] It is from this servitude to the sign that "Christian

freedom has liberated those it found in subjection to useful signs . . . by raising them, through interpreting the signs to which they were subject, to the things of which those signs were the signs."[11] Captivity to the sign is inability, or refusal, to pierce its opacity; not knowing, or not seeking, the range of potential further meaning it can have in a larger discourse.[12] So the Jews who refused to understand the Old Testament as interpreted in the New remained captive to the closed world of its (nonetheless useful) signs.

This is the schema that underlies Gregory's topos, though evidently without the sophisticated semiological scaffolding that it has in Augustine.[13] We now have a very full and meticulous account of Augustine's hermeneutical language and theory.[14] A similarly painstaking examination of Gregory's exegetical vocabulary and principles might yield some interesting comparisons. I suspect it would reveal a total lack in his writings of anything corresponding to either Augustine's growing interest in literal exegesis or his increasing care in the use of terms such as *allegoria* and *figura,* amply documented in that meticulous study. The affinity between the two thinkers is real and considerable, but it must not be allowed to obscure the no less fundamental differences. I must here turn aside for a moment to confess that I have always been more deeply impressed by the almost unmeasurable distance that separates the intellectual worlds inhabited by the two thinkers than by their shared ideas, only to find, when I tried to define the difference, that somehow it melted away in the process. When you scratch Gregory, the blood you draw always seems to be Augustinian. And yet somehow the absolute gap persists, and cries out for description. This is precisely the case here. The conceptual scheme on which Gregory claims to construct his biblical exegesis is clearly based on Augustine's, and his exegetical practice is quite often reminiscent of Augustine's; yet, reading him, one is aware that one is moving in a totally different intellectual world. The problem is to define the difference.

On Augustine's principles as propounded in the *De doctrina christiana,* exegesis should proceed on two levels. The first is the understanding of the human signs, the words written by the scriptural authors, and this study is where the exegete draws on the secular disciplines of the grammarian and rhetorician. But having once understood the words, the exegete will have reached another

level of signification, for the things signified by the words are themselves signs: the *signa divinitus data* for the salvation of men. It is notoriously the case that Augustine's own exegetical practice is very often out of line with his stated principles.[15] This makes comparison with Gregory's practice less illuminating than it might be. As an assiduous reader of Augustine, Gregory could find encouragement for his own exegetical procedures, even at their most baroque, without becoming aware of their often sharp divergence from the hermeneutic principles laid down, but very often ignored, by Augustine.

Take, for example, Gregory's exegesis of chapter 14 in the first Book of Kings (that is, 1 Sam.). Turning aside from the bloody battle with the Philistines that is the subject of the narrative he is commenting, he quickly rises into the thinner air of his chosen theme: "because we are describing the course of a spiritual battle, we must continue what has gone before in what is to follow."[16] And continuing what has gone before is just what Gregory goes on to do, giving up the pretence of following the sequence of the text; it is no longer the text but the dynamic of his chosen theme that sets the hermeneutical framework. He is not often so explicit as this, but any reader of, for instance, his *Moralia* will be familiar with those sustained treatises on themes near to his heart that Gregory will every now and then indulge in. Grover Zinn has compared[17] these "carefully crafted" passages of teaching—most importantly on the life of asceticism and prayer—to jewels set in their exegetical contexts. As he observes, it is tempting to remove these jewels from their settings, ignoring the genre and thereby doing violence to the peculiar quality of the interplay of Gregory's thought with the biblical text that provides its matrix.

Gregory's "constructs" (to use Zinn's aptly chosen word) are "the result of a process of interpreting a sacred text for the edification . . . of Gregory's audience of listeners and readers."[18] Zinn's chosen case studies provide fine examples of how Gregory made selective use of multiple texts as "pegs" for his spiritual interpretations. Behind the appearance of arbitrary contrivance there is, very often, a carefully orchestrated complex of *testimonia,* further scriptural texts, that "serve a vital purpose of shaping, directing, and/or confirming Gregory's perception of the meaning" of the text being commented on.[19] Gregory's commentary has its own rich and complex logic,

but it is not that of the modern, or indeed the ancient, scriptural commentator. Whatever the exegetical cost, it is the continuity of the subject matter that dominates the sequence of the exposition. The treatise may have its origin in the text, but once it takes off from that diving board, the periodic returns to the text, under the guise of "figurative" exposition (I refrain, for the present purpose, from the finer distinctions Gregory makes between the different sorts of figurative exposition), are no more than polite obeisances toward the convention of the form. The text is mercilessly atomized and tortured to support a treatise disguised as commentary. This is not without good rhetorical warrant and precedent, but it is exegetical free-wheeling, all the same. Only very rarely does Gregory acknowledge that he is indulging in a digression—as he does in the notorious case of the thirty-fourth of his homilies on the Gospels. There he expounds the lost-and-found stories of Luke 15.1–10. Half-way through a rather fine sermon on repentance, a sermon well anchored in his text, he breaks off, with rather less than minimal support in his text, to expound the hierarchies of angels and their ministries, only to catch himself to admit, nine chapters later, just before the final vignette of the little story about penitence with which the sermon ends, that he has digressed.[20] Gregory's homiletic exposition can, and often does, follow a path in its flight that manages to combine the logic of his text with that of his own thought; but the failure of the two to coincide must be so familiar to all readers of Gregory's homilies that I will refrain from mutiplying examples.[21]

The modern reader may yearn for the captivity to the letter from which Gregory felt himself delivered,[22] but we shall do better to try to follow him in his flight. He makes no secret of his destination: "those who seek the purity of the contemplative life are to be shown not the ordinary things about the sacred Scripture [non communia de sacro eloquio], but rather the higher and more sublime things, so that the more they are delighted by the superior goods [nobiliora] they hear about, the more ardently they might raise themselves to the heights by seeing."[23] The text is a springboard for the contemplative, a flight from hearing to seeing. For Gregory, rising to its spiritual sense is a kind of homecoming. The Scriptures are a pleasant, cool forest: "Whenever we enter it by discussing it with understanding [intelligendo discutimus], what else

are we doing than entering its refreshing shade to shelter from the heat of this world? There, reading, we munch the green shoots of its thoughts; expounding them we ruminate."[24]

This is not like Augustine. We risk obliterating the gulf that separates the two writers' views on interpreting the Scriptures if we stop at the true observation that both of them see the Bible as a world of symbols that point beyond themselves to some realm beyond the letter. Gregory wanders about at his ease in the cool, green shade of the Scriptures—understood, of course, spiritually—in a world more real than that from which it provides a shelter. Here he is at home, he knows his way about its familiar paths, delighting in the flowers he can pick as he wanders freely among them. It is as if he were familiar with the referents of the scriptural symbols, and had merely to chose the appropriate signifiers among the endless possibilities offered to him by the scriptural text. Gregory moves with ease between the two worlds of sign and meaning. We do not find him searching, like Augustine, in the dark, among obscure symbols that stand between him and the realities they point to, significations that they are only too apt to conceal rather than to reveal, meanings to be carefully unraveled, not manifest. Augustine's forest is altogether darker, its paths less familiar and exploration more laborious. The signs speak a language more perplexing, one to be learned, perhaps painfully. Captivity to the letter was altogether more immediate a threat to Augustine.

The Jew was Augustine's metaphor for the constant peril of premature closure of the Christian understanding. Like Augustine's, Gregory's Jew also stood as a metaphor for the failure of transcendence; but his Jew had much easier work to do, and, conversely, failure in it was the more blameworthy. Augustine's hermeneutic theory took shape in a world that had come nothing like as far as Gregory's in being shaped by the Bible. It abounded in dark places; blocks opaque to the light of the Gospel lay scattered about in it. In his world the crucial question had been "what is a Christian?" By imperceptible shifts a world had come into being in which the crucial question was "how should a Christian conduct his life?" Compared with Augustine, Gregory could take for granted the settled contours of his spiritual landscape. Christianity had come to give definitive shape to what we might follow fashionable writers in calling a totalizing discourse. The opaque patches of Augustine's world had become

translucent in the light of the Gospel. This collapse into a greater simplicity[25] displaced the intellectual anxieties of Augustine's age. Christianity could now be taken for granted. There might still be some, Gregory conceded, "who perhaps do not carry the Christian name," but if there were such, they were marginal, and he was more interested in those who did bear the name but were like the *iniqui* who "deviate from righteousness by the wickedness of their works," who were Christians in name only, out of outward conformity.[26] This is why Gregorian exegesis is so heavily dominated by his tropological interpretation and why his exposition merges into exhortation. As Ann Matter has so beautifully reminded us, the shift from the allegorical to the tropological is a shift from "belief" to "behavior."[27] Behavior, not belief, is what caused Gregory disquiet.

Gregory's exegetical practice sometimes suggests that he came quite close to believing that the letter really killeth—or that, if it doesn't quite kill, it at least induces a tedium that can only be avoided by hurrying over it as quickly as possible, and getting on with the much more serious business of the spirit.[28] For Gregory the spirit listed inexorably in the direction of tropology. The *res gesta* invariably signified a *gerendum.*[29] How to conduct himself in the sight of God is what, above all, the Christian liberated from servitude to the letter had to learn from the Scripture.[30] Augustine's explorations of the Scriptures sought an opening into a spiritual world half-known, half-disclosed through the scriptural symbols. Gregory's way was almost the contrary: he came to interpret the Scriptures with a mind fully formed by what the symbols stood for, to reinterpret what they could tell his audience about their lives in the light of his knowledge. This seems to me the exact reverse of what Paul Ricoeur has said about medieval hermeneutics: "Medieval hermeneutics pursued the coincidence between the understanding of the faith in the *lectio divina* and the understanding of reality as a whole, divine and human, historical and physical . . . Scripture appears here as an inexhaustible treasure which stimulates thought about everything, which conceals a total interpretation of the world . . . Hermeneutics is the very deciphering of life in the mirror of the text."[31]

Gregory does not so much decipher life in the mirror of the text as the text in the mirror of life, the fullest Christian life; and, although it is true that the Scripture is an inexhaustible treasure

for Gregory, it is not so much that it stimulates his thought about everything, but rather that it will yield its treasure under the stimulus of Christian life lived at its fullest and truest.

Nature and Miracle as a Forest of Symbols

Thus far I have been dealing with Gregory's Jew in an area in which his function has long been familiar. I would like now, in concluding, briefly to note another area in which his Jew also has a part to play, no less decisive, though less obtrusive and less explicit.[32] For the world as a whole is, in some ways, very like the Scripture for Gregory. This is hardly surprising, for he construes it through two media: his holy man and the Scriptures. Not only are the Scriptures, therefore, a forest of symbols, but so is the whole of God's creation. A striking homology runs through Gregory's accounts of our understanding of the Scriptures and our understanding of the world of nature and of miracle. Nature and miracle tended to melt into one another, for Gregory as for Augustine in his later years, but that is not a theme I shall dwell on here.[33]

Events, whether natural or miraculous, were fully themselves and at the same time pointed beyond themselves. Thus, Gregory treated miracles on a par with the things signified by the words of the Scriptures: "per potentiam aliud ostendunt, et per mysterium aliud loquuntur."[34] Events, especially if miraculous, had to be treated as facts and signs at the same time. This is interesting. Although Gregory could have found authority for proceeding thus in Augustine, he could equally find a counter-authority in Cassian. Cassian thought reports of miracles served to satisfy curiosity rather than to edify;[35] they led nowhere. This precedent may, perhaps, help to explain Gregory's very ambivalent view of the relationship between the performing of miracles and holiness. At any rate, ambivalent is what his view was. Miracles could as easily reveal holiness as they could conceal devilry, or—like those that his missionary Augustine was rumored to have been perpetrating among the heathen English—they could leave open the question as to whether they manifested inner pride or humility, faith or heresy.[36] But *signa* miracles certainly were, that is, events with a meaning beyond their mere occurrence, pointing either to an inner

human world or to divine purpose at work in the outer world of nature and history.

Nothing reveals more clearly Gregory's sense of his world, or rather of his worlds—I stress the plural because I have in mind both his inner and his outer worlds—than his ambivalence about the need for miracles. He seemed to think that a lack of modern miracles could undermine the faith of his contemporaries. He had two alternative answers to such worries. Often he argues that miracles were needed in the time of the apostles and the heroic age of Christianity, during the age of the persecutions, to establish the faith of waverers.[37] But now that the Church has "tamed the pride of unbelief, she looks no longer for miracles, but only for the merit of works [non iam virtutum signa, sed sola merita operum requirit]."[38] Here is that settled assurance that his generation has arrived, is fully established in the age of faith. Christianity had triumphed, "among all nations, pretty well [in cunctis fere nationibus]."[39] The quest of faith, therefore, was over; it had become superseded by the quest for the merit of works. The Jew had become redundant, except as a reminder that there were real, literal Jews and a handful of pagans still left to be converted in remote corners of Gregory's world.

There was, however, a less obvious and less overt role left for the Jew to play: for Gregory's confidence about his own times of achieved faith had no room for relapse into comfortable assurance. His eschatology shows a striking duality, which has not escaped attention.[40] On the one hand, there is his sense of apocalyptic terror, the threat of an impending end already apparent in the destruction he saw around him; on the other hand, no less real is the sense of security of a triumphant faith. Neither streak in his eschatology, however, induced paralysis of the will or atrophy of realistic thought and imaginative action. On the contrary: time and again Gregory's pastoral instructions are given an urgency of tone informed by the power of his eschatological awareness. The nearness of the end and the security of achievement both called for tenacity in pursuing the urgent tasks demanded by *conversio.* An unending imperative, conversion was no safe haven of repose; the Red Sea may have been safely crossed, "but in the wilderness of this life we keep being faced by the enemy . . . conversion gives birth to security, but security is the mother of complacency."[41]

Security, like the impending end, is a spur to labor: "just as present security brings travail to the wicked, so present travail brings eternal security to the good . . . So it is written: 'Blessed is the anxious man'" (Prov. 28.14).[42] Paradoxically, it might indeed be said that Gregory gave his Jew a bigger task than he had ever had before: for the danger of premature closure of the Christian understanding remained ever present, even in these fully Christian times. Understanding of the Scripture would always need deepening and expanding into the contemplation fully to be realized only in vision. And this danger was compounded by the ever present danger of relaxing the springs of will and action, permitting a premature closure of the Christian life that would stop short of perfect charity.

Gregory's alternative way of allaying anxieties over the lack of modern miracles is more interesting. Although he had often reassured his hearers that miracles no longer happened in the world because they were no longer needed now that everyone was a believer, he was nevertheless anxious to reassure them that miracles were still happening all around them, even on their own doorstep, in Italy. It was a comforting doctrine, and only against this backcloth can we appreciate the terrifying image Gregory can paint of the last times. Among the signs that will herald the coming of the Antichrist is the drying up of miracles in the Church, along with the other signs of the imminent end: "for then shall prophecy vanish, the grace of healing shall be taken away; the virtue of great abstinence shall be diminished; the words of teaching shall fall silent and the prodigies of miracles will be taken away."[43] Not that miracles will altogether disappear from the world, for Gregory goes on to qualify his image: it is only that they will be less visible to most of the faithful, overshadowed by the huge power of the adversary. "While the holy Church is, as it were, humbled by the removal of miraculous signs [subtractis signorum uirtutibus], the just who venerate her for heavenly hope rather than on account of present signs will have their reward multiplied; and the minds of the wicked who oppose her and refuse to seek the invisible things she promises will be quickly made manifest, when they are no longer compelled by visible signs." The absence of signs, the silencing of the word, the withdrawal of miracle will then bring the sharp eschatological separation of the wheat from

the chaff. This is the image of a world closed in upon itself; we are trapped among things deprived of their signification. It may herald the final opening into newness for those who have accepted the offer of transcendence, but it is the final closure for those who have rejected it.

NOTES

I have revised this paper only to take account of the contribution by Grover Zinn in this volume, and have otherwise left it as delivered, to keep the conversational tone characteristic of the symposium as a whole.

1. "Nonnunquam vero imperfecta nostra cogitatio necdum roborata, dum citius hominibus ostenditur, resistentium adversitate dissipatur, et cum conatur ante tempus videri quia sit, agit ut non sit" (*Mor.* 30.10.41 [*CCSL* 143B:1520.159–62]).

2. *Reg.* 2.49 (*CCSL* 144:149.1111–20). Some of the more interesting parallels I have noted: *Hom.Ev.* 1.10.2, 2.22.3 (*PL* 76:1111A–C, 1175C–D); *Hom.Ez.* 1.2.11, 10.16 (*CCSL* 142:23, 151); *Mor.* 9.31.47–33.49 (*CCSL* 143:488–90); *Mor.* 11.15.24 (*CCSL* 143A:599–600); *Mor.* 30.1.2 (*CCSL* 143B:1491–92); *Mor.* 35.14.26–27 (*CCSL* 143B:1790–92).

3. *Reg.* 3.2–3, 5 (*CCSL* 144:205).

4. *Religion and Society in the Age of St. Augustine* (London, 1972), 19.

5. Straw, *Gregory.*

6. *Ep.* 13.15 (Here and throughout the numbering of the letters follows the edition by Ewald and Hartmann in *MGH, Epistolae* 1 and 2).

7. *"De Doctrina Christiana": A Classic of Western Culture,* ed. Duane W. H. Arnold and Pamela Bright (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995).

8. "Miserabilis animae servitus signa pro rebus accipere" (*De doctrina christiana* 3.5.9).

9. See Robert A. Markus, "Signs, Communication and Communities in Augustine's *De Doctrina Christiana,*" in *"De Doctrina Christiana": A Classic of Western Culture,* ed. Arnold and Bright, 97–108, from which I have borrowed part of the next paragraph. (I refrain from establishing exact equivalences with Saussurian terminology.) To the bibliography appended to that paper should be added the very thorough discussion by R. W. Bernard, "In Figura: Terminology Pertaining to Figurative Exegesis in the Works of Augustine of Hippo" (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 1984).

10. *De doctrina christiana* 3.5.9–6.10.

11. Ibid. 3.8.12.

12. Ibid. 3.9.13.

13. This observation, however, needs some qualification. Gregory does on occasion articulate a conceptual schema that approximates to Augustine's. Some passages that contain distinctly Augustinian resonances: *Hom.Ez.* 2.10.1: "an non est mirabile quando aliud auribus sonat, atque exit ad intelligentiam quod non sonabat?"; *Mor.* 4.Praef.1: "dum enim alia ex aliis colligimus, facile in eius verbis agnoscimus, aliud esse quod intimant, aliud quod sonant"; *Hom.Ez.* 1.2.2: "verbum quod foris protulit/quod intus audierat."

14. See Bernard, "In Figura."

15. See, e.g., G. Strauss, *Schriftgebrauch, Schriftauslegung und Schriftbeweis bei Augustin,* Beiträge zur Geschichte der biblischen Hermeneutik 1 (Tübingen, 1959), 76.

16. *Reg.* 5.153 (*CCSL* 144:512.3634–35).

17. See his paper in the present volume, p. 168.

18. Ibid., p. 172.

19. Ibid., p. 176.

20. *Hom.Ev.* 2.34.1–5 (*PL* 76:1246B–49A), mainly on repentance; 6–14 (1249A–55D), angels and the celestial hierarchy; 15–17 (1255D–57C), apology and return to God's mercy; 18 (1257C–59A), Maximian's story of Victorinus's penitence.

21. In patristic exegesis in general it is axiomatic that what the Bible announces is the Christian truth, and that we therefore know, in a sense, what it has to tell us before we start: "On connaît donc d'avance le point d'arrivée; ce qu'on cherche c'est le meilleur chemin pour y parvenir" (T. Todorov, *Symbolisme et interprétation* [Paris, 1978], 104). I discuss this further below, at note 31.

22. Even if he or she does not go quite as far as Dudden, *Gregory,* 1:194–95.

23. *Reg.* 3.124 (*CCSL* 144:267.2501–5).

24. *Hom.Ez.* 1.5.1: "Ibique uiridissimas sententiarum herbas legendo carpimus, tractando ruminamus" (*CCSL* 142:57.2–6).

25. See Robert A. Markus, "The Sacred and the Secular: From Augustine to Gregory the Great," *JThS* n.s. 36 (1985): 84–96.

26. *Mor.* 18.6.12: "impius namque pro infideli ponitur, idest a pietate religionis alienus; iniquus vero dicitur, qui pravitate operis ab aequitate discordat, vel si fortasse christianae fidei nomen portat" (*CCSL* 143A: 892.9–12). On Christians in name only, cf. *Mor.* 27.18.36–37 (*CCSL* 143B:1358–59); *Hom.Ev.* 2.29.4, 32.5 (*PL* 76:1215B–16B, 1236A–C).

27. Matter, *Voice,* 14, quoting J. B. Allen, *The Ethical Poetics of the Later Middle Ages: A Decorum of Convenient Distinction* (Toronto, 1982), 213–14.

28. E.g., *Hom.Ev.* 2.40.2 (*PL* 76:1302A–4C); cf. *Mor.* 20.27.56 (*CCSL* 143A:1044–45), and, of course, the many places where he does this without saying so.

29. *Hom.Ev.* 2.21.2 (*PL* 76:1170C); cf. *Mor.* 19.20.29: "ueraciter factum . . . significaret . . . ueraciter faciendum" (*CCSL* 143A:981.19–20).

30. It is hardly open to doubt that *expositio moralis* constitutes by far the greater part of all his homilies, with the possible exception of those on the Gospels.

31. *Essays on Biblical Interpretation,* ed. L. S. Mudge (London, 1981), 52–53. Cf. the exposition by Todorov, *Symbolisme et interprétation,* 91–124, which ignores the fact that for Augustine charity is a negatively normative criterion of exegesis. The final chapters of the first book of his *De doctrina christiana* are a plea, first, for correct exegesis. Mistakes in interpretation are to be corrected, even if they are not pernicious, and Augustine will go to considerable lengths in expounding rules (including, eventually, those of Tyconius) that may help to eliminate mistakes; but provided an interpretation serves the purpose of building up charity, it will not be pernicious even if it is wrong. Much of Todorov's argument is contradicted by passages he quotes in the course of it.

32. Jewish unbelief is brought into explicit relation with miracles in *Hom.Ev.* 1.10.2 and 2.31.3 (*PL* 76:1111A–C, 1228C–29A).

33. On Augustine see, e.g., *De civitate Dei* 10.12 (cf. Gregory, *Hom.Ev.* 2.26.12 [*PL* 76:1203C–4C]); *Mor.* 6.15.18–19 [*CCSL* 143: 295–97]). On natural law and its dissolution in Augustine, see Robert A. Markus, "Marius Victorinus and Augustine," *Cambridge History of Later Greek and Early Medieval Philosophy,* ed. A. H. Armstrong (Cambridge, 1967), 329–419, at 398–402; and Markus, *End,* 149.

34. *Hom.Ev.* 1.2.19 (*PL* 76:1082C). Cf. W. D. McCready, *Signs of Sanctity: Miracles in the Thought of Gregory the Great* (Toronto, 1989), 59–60, 87n.16, referring to P. Boglioni, *Miracle et nature chez Grégoire le Grand,* Cahiers d'études médiévales 1 (Montreal, 1974), 11–102.

35. See *Collationes* 18.1 and *Institutiones* Praef.7, referred to by McCready, *Signs of Sanctity,* 102.

36. *Ep.* 11.36. Cf. *Hom.Ev.* 1.4.3 (*PL* 76:1090C–91B); *Mor.* 20.6.16–14.25 (*CCSL* 143A:1015–22), for an extended discussion of miracles performed by heretics. See also *Mor.* 33.35.60 (*CCSL* 143B:1724–26); and, on the devils' miracles, 34.18.33 (*CCSL* 143B:1757–58).

37. E.g., *Hom.Ev.* 2.28.1 (*PL* 76:1211A–B); 2.29.4 (*PL* 76:1215B–16B); *Mor.* 27.18.36–37 (*CCSL* 143B:1358–59); 18.6.12 (*CCSL* 143A:892). Cf. M. Van Uytanghe, "Scepticisme doctrinal au seuil du Moyen Age? Les

objections du diacre Pierre dans les *Dialogues* de Grégoire le Grand," in Fontaine et al., *Grégoire,* 315–26, at 318.

38. *Mor.* 27.18.36 (*CCSL* 143B:1358.24–25).

39. *Mor.* 19.13.21 (*CCSL* 143A:973.33–34). On the triumph of Christianity in Gregory's world, see, e.g., *Hom.Ev.* 2.32.5 (*PL* 76:1236A–C); *Mor.* 17.10.13–14, 18.6.12, 19.9.16–13.21, 20.37.72, 23.8.15, 27.18.36–37, 31.2.2–7.10 (*CCSL* 143A:892, 968–73, 1055–56; 143B:1155, 1358–59, 1549–57).

40. See Markus, "Sacred and Secular"; and C. Dagens, "La fin des temps et l'église selon S. Grégoire le Grand," *RechSR* 58 (1970): 273–88.

41. *Mor.* 24.11.27: "conuersio videlicet securitatem parit, mater autem neglegentiae solet esse securitas" (*CCSL* 143B:1206.61–62). The same point is made, in identical words, in *Ep.* 7.22. I wish to thank J. J. O'Donnell for drawing my attention to these passages and their significance. On conversion and renewal, see also G. B. Ladner, "Gregory the Great and Gregory VII: A Comparison of Their Concepts of Renewal," *Viator* 4 (1973): 1–31.

42. *Mor.* 10.20.37: "sicut enim malis praesens securitas laborem, ita bonis praesens labor perpetuam securitatem parit" (*CCSL* 143: 564. 1–3).

43. *Mor.* 34.3.7 (*CCSL* 143B:1737.70–73); it is noteworthy that the present age is described as the time of healing and teaching in *Mor.* 19.23.29.

2

CAROLE STRAW

Purity and Death

Old and simpleminded, Bishop Januarius of Cagliari was exasperating to rebuke. The bishop had usurped a neighbor's land; the very circumstances were appalling. After plowing the field one Sunday morning, Januarius stopped to celebrate the mass, and when solemnities were over, the old bishop returned to finish the job, uprooting even the boundary markers of the fields. "We still spare your gray hairs," Gregory wrote in an angry warning. But "the nearer you approach death, the more careful and fearful you ought to become."[1] Death should inspire the bracing, purifying fear that motivates repentance and reform.[2]

Death shapes life[3]—be it a denial of death that bereaves modern life of heroism and purpose,[4] or the *memento mori* that fashions a life of philosophical intensity.[5] Because the central tenet of Christianity is the promise of immortality through Christ's triumph over death and the devil, attitudes toward death become crucial in understanding Christianity. This is an obvious point, but one worth reiterating. The Christian's sight must always be set on the next world, and in consequence life in this world must be ordered and disciplined to attain that cherished goal. At issue, then, is precisely how this process works in Gregory's thought.[6]

Like writers before him, Gregory believes that death brings true life *(vera vita)*:[7] it is the gateway to eternity, and it inspires the virtue that is the life of the soul. But death is also the end of life as we know it, and Gregory is quite honest about this. Paradoxically, death is both to be welcomed and yet to be feared. An analysis of this unsettling ambivalence illuminates the centrality of sacrifice in Gregory's thought: all actions, including living and dying, must be done not for oneself but for God.[8] Within this perspective, fear

of death and submission to death become essential in the salvific process as sacrifices to God.

Gregory's thoughts on death unfold in layers of ambiguities. On one hand, Gregory will minimize death and offer consolations. He assures us that death of the mere body "should not in the least be feared,"[9] and he provides several reasons. Following Platonic tradition, death is a separation of the composite soul and body that liberates the soul from its fleshly prison. Even the dissolution *(solvere)* of the flesh should not be feared,[10] for such decay only facilitates the release of the soul from the body; it is a sort of liberating fragmentation.

Death can appear relatively benign in other images as well. Quite frequently, Gregory employs the classical imagery of sleep,[11] as well as the euphemisms of "departure" *(egressus, exitus),*[12] and "passing" *(recessus).*[13] Death is also God's summons to the next world, an order Gregory can take quite literally. The *Dialogues* show a startling case of mistaken identity in such a context. On his way to Constantinople, an aristocrat, Stephen, takes ill and dies suddenly. He is conducted to Hell, where he sees with his own eyes the punishments he had formerly heard of and not believed in. The noble is brought before the infernal court for trial. But marvelously, the judge dismisses his case, explaining that he had ordered the aristocrat's neighbor, Stephen the blacksmith, to be brought down for trial—not him.[14] Apparently, mistakes can occur even in the other world.

Such relatively benign imagery might suggest that death is part of a natural process, as the ancient Greeks thought. This is not the case, and here Gregory follows Hebraic tradition.[15] Death was not ordained by God any more than sin and evil were. Death was a needless misfortune, introduced when the devil's wicked persuasions caused man's Fall.[16] For this reason, the word *death* often simply refers to the devil.[17] After Adam's sin, death became a debt *(debitum)* all humanity owed God in repayment for their transgressions.[18] Death is thus an irruption of the natural order. And even though this Fall made possible the generosity of the Redeemer's mercy, death is always an evil associated with the devil and man's loss of Paradise.

In bleaker moments, Gregory uses images capturing death's finitude and desolation.[19] As a terminus, death's ruthless finality forces

us to recognize that our lives are not in our own control. "However great your temporal influence and prosperity may be," Gregory advises Gulfaris, *magister militum* of Istria, "it has an end—the limit of death."[20] Death means that "what we love is ended entirely; and something begins where pain is never ended."[21] We cannot stop it. Death reminds us of our essential fallibility and impotence, not only in securing worldly prosperity, but even in assuring moral continuity. "In what virtue can we flourish," Gregory asks, when we are "weighed down with the body? . . . To this [question], we have in our very selves the answer of death, so that we should not trust in ourselves" (cf. 2 Cor. 1.9).[22] Death proves our pathetic vulnerability, the difficulty, and perhaps even the impossibility, of persevering in virtue.

Death is a limit, not only to our power and accomplishment, but also to our troubles.[23] Freeing the soul from its fleshly prison, death would also extinguish the temptations that cause sin.[24] Even more mercifully, death puts an end to fear of death itself. In heaven, among the angels, God, and infinite light, we shall feel "no fear of death" and we shall delight "in the gift of eternal incorruption," Gregory writes.[25] Fear itself is an evil; death ends the fear that death brings.[26] Fear of dying should give way to a contempt for death; for priests, to a willingness to die sacrificially as shepherds for their flock;[27] for the faithful, to a willingness to die in secret, if not public, martyrdom.[28] But contempt for death can be also a very personal desire for release. In his final years, Gregory writes poignantly of his longing for death.[29] Death is the cure for suffering: "to live is punishment" and "death is the only remedy."[30] His "only consolation is the expectation of death."[31] Such candid expressions suggest the sincerity of his earlier writings: his realism (or pessimism) is grounded in his personal experience as one who identified himself with the sufferings of Job.[32]

Nevertheless, Gregory is honest about the anxieties death can cause. It can make us doubt the survival of the spirit. If death is the dissolution of the body, Gregory can appreciate just what this means to the average person. In the *Dialogues,* he admits to Peter the importance of our carnal existence: "We are born carnal and doubt the existence of anything we cannot see with our bodily eyes."[33] Thus, it is very difficult to imagine the survival of the soul when the body wastes away. Significantly, a great part of the fourth

book of the *Dialogues* aims to prove the survival of the soul after the body dies, an exercise that would not be necessary if death did not indeed seem to most people like the complete end.[34] For this reason, grief must be limited, for excessive tears imply that one doubts the eternal life of the soul and is bereft of hope.[35]

On a deep level, Gregory recognizes that death ravages the body and causes pain. The burden of sickness precedes it,[36] and the separation of the soul from the body is painful.[37] Gregory imagines the body as "empty" after the soul has departed, like the channel of a river that has dried up.[38] Dryness, then, is associated with death. Gregory himself complains that gout has afflicted him, so that his "body is dried up even as if in burial."[39] This dryness suggests the body's return to dust—dust that could vanish on the breath of the wind. Indeed, death is a destruction so complete that Gregory can liken oblivion to it.[40] Similarly, death is annihilation and extinction *(funditus exstinguere),*[41] for "what we put to death, we cause that it should not exist at all."[42] Death is "the way where we go, and do not return by it" (Job 16.22).[43] Only certain saints will enjoy peaceful deaths;[44] for many, death is a raging battle with demons for control of the soul in its final hours, a fierce struggle that parallels the apocalyptic catastrophes of Gregory's times.[45]

However distressing, physical death is not meant to be the focus of the Christian's fear. It is only the external death of the body and the soul's separation from the flesh.[46] What one must truly fear is the internal death of the soul, the second and true spiritual death when the soul is severed from God.[47] This death means everlasting punishment for the soul as well as for the body that would "never completely die in punishment, since it always exists in dying."[48] The monumental horror of the second death of the soul and the accompanying torment of the body puts the first death into its proper perspective.[49] The result is that death and life are transvalued, as Gregory writes: "To compare temporal life with eternal life, it must be called death rather than life. For what else is our daily slide into corruption, but a kind of extension of death?"[50] Like Ambrose, Augustine, and others before him, Gregory cites Paul in Gal. 6.14: "Mihi vivere Christus est *et mori lucrum* [For me Christ is to live, and to die a gain]."[51] He also speaks of death as true life *(vera vita),* as we have noted.[52] This true life of the soul after death is the goal of all Christians. The

greatest fear must be the possibility of the second death of the soul that separates Christians from God forever.

But what is it exactly about this second death that Gregory fears most? Gregory does speak of separation from God, and certainly of punishment, but he does not discuss the physical torments of Hell with the gruesome detail of later medieval writers.[53] Instead, the primary focus of Gregory's anxiety and fear is the moment of confrontation with the Judge—the moment of truth. "Already, the avenger is dragging them to judgment."[54] In this final reckoning, the fear is that one might be weighed in the balance and found wanting. Gregory fears the shame, the guilt, the blushing, the humiliating revelations that will confound the sinner as he is convicted of failing his Lord.[55] But perhaps in being so personal and psychological, this fear can become manageable.

Gregory's strategy is to cure fear with more fear: to quote Publilius Syrus, "The pain that kills pain acts as a medicine." "Certain death awaits everyone. Do not refuse to ponder the uncertain knowledge of your temporal life," Gregory preaches.[56] So many uncertainties lie beyond human calculation, but death is inevitable. However, the anxieties that such uncertainties cause can be nourished as fears and transformed to become useful weapons against the certainty and necessity of death. Christians must fear retribution not only for sins they have committed but also for secret sins of which they are unaware. "And if he has avoided all evil deeds that he can recognize, when he comes before the strict judge, he dreads the more those evils in himself which he could not recognize," Gregory writes.[57] Wicked deeds are one thing. But, Gregory asks, are we able to offer an explanation for our thoughts?[58] How many are our sins? Has our penitence been sufficient for them? The Lord has gathered up our secret sins, as if in a little sack, and only on Judgment Day will they be revealed for all to see.[59] We should fear embarrassing surprises. "Even if [the Christian] is conscious of what he did," Gregory writes, "he still does not know how minutely his deeds will be judged."[60] The severity of the Judge remains a mystery, but one is prudent to expect his harshness: Christ died a death he did not owe to pay the debt of death man owed. Think of how angry he will be at Judgment, Gregory warns.[61] Sudden death is the final terrifying uncertainty because it can undermine all precautions. Like a thief in the night (compare Luke 12.39), death can

"come unforeseen, breaking into the dwelling of our body . . . And when the spirit does not foresee its coming losses, death snatches it unaware to punishment."[62] Foresight is the precious remedy of control against such dangerous uncertainties. Significantly, this virtue of foresight links Gregory with the Stoic tradition that inspires so much of his moral theology.[63]

What distinguishes the good Christian from the weak soul is precisely this foresight—the piercing awareness of uncertainty and the cultivation of a defensive discipline of fear and penitence because of it. In contrast, the wicked man mistakes uncertainty for certainty because of his trust in temporal life. He "puts his trust in the life of the flesh and thinks that those things continue for long which he holds at the moment . . . [he] never reflects how uncertain his happiness is; which, if he did consider the uncertainty of fleeting life, he would never hold for a certainty things uncertain."[64] The proud think they have some control over their fate by direct action. They think they can "delay death with gifts," but they are deceived.[65] In various ways, they try to extend their lives, but this is impossible, for inevitably "death meets the undisciplined."[66]

Meanwhile, good Christians cultivate the fearful solicitude that comes from a full recognition of life's uncertainities. Gregory advises the empress's ladies-in-waiting: "until that day [of death] comes you ought to be ever suspicious and fearful, to be afraid of faults and wash them with daily tears." Even St. Paul still had fears, and if "one who is caught up into heaven still fears, shall one whose conversation is still on earth desire already not to fear? . . . Security is the mother of carelessness," Gregory concludes.[67] Indeed, the Lord has ordained that the final hour of our departure be unknown, precisely "so that our spirit may always be on guard. Then, since we cannot exactly foresee it, we may continually make ready for it."[68] Uncertainty marshals foresight. The soul should always be on the qui vive.

Despite their foresight and careful planning, Christians should not expect a calm death, even though they may be just. As Christ fell into agony in Gethsemane, he represented in himself the struggles of his members, who suffer terror and dread approaching death. We should not be alarmed if we so suffer and fear.[69] Indeed, "the elect are always afraid of a strict judgment, and they especially dread it" upon

dying: "Their fear is more acute the nearer their eternal retribution approaches."[70] In the *Dialogues,* Gregory mentions a saintly man who suffered violent fear at death, but who returned to tell of the wonderful welcome he had received in heaven.[71] Gregory tells also of a saintly deacon of Marsia brutally decapitated by the Lombards. But marvelously, such fearful deaths can be purgative, restoring the soul to salvation: "Generally, the very dread that grips a departing soul is sufficient to purify it of its minor faults," Gregory states.[72]

Consequently, good Christians always keep the certain uncertainty of death before their eyes before they meet the dreadful Judge. They are conscious that fear is purgative, a cleansing fire burning pride and instilling the penitential disposition necessary to meet the Judge. In homily 37, Gregory likens this confrontation with the *Iudex Tremendus* to facing battle with a king (cf. Luke 14.16–33): one must send out a delegation and plead for terms of peace while the king is still some distance away. The delegation sent out before us—of tears, works of mercy, and the slaughter of propitiatory victims on the altar—mediates for us and secures peace.[73] All these are sacrifices to Gregory, whether of compunction and contrition, of alms and good works, of one's very self, and especially of the mass.[74] Suffering is not minimized, not even in the eucharistic sacrifice. "The sacrifice of the altar, offered with tears and generosity of heart, pleads in a unique way for our forgiveness," Gregory explains, "because the one who, *himself rising from the dead will never die again* (Rom. 6.9) is even now suffering for us anew through this sacrifice in his own mysterious way. As often as we offer him the sacrifice of his passion, we renew his passion for our forgiveness."[75] As Christ mysteriously suffers for us in the sacrifice of the Eucharist, we should offer ourselves in sacrificial tears as we make that sacrifice.[76] Such was the behavior of the saintly Cassius, bishop of Narni. He performed the sacrifice of the mass nearly every day, "and his life corresponded to the sacrifice": he gave alms and presented himself as a tearful offering even as he sacrificed the holy victim at the mass.[77] More than a just penitent,[78] Cassius makes God his "debtor" by his supererogatory acts of goodness and penitence.[79]

Such sacrifices expiate sins (and perhaps earn merit), and it is in this light that the fear of death makes sense, allowing us to locate the significance of death in Gregory's theology. The dread and ter-

ror of death that one feels as purification *become* sacrifices to God: "consideration of the shortness of man's life is itself an offering of great power with our Creator," Gregory writes.[80] What else can man do facing God's overwhelming power but be humble and offer himself in sacrifice? In the final analysis, Gregory is facing an existential dilemma: how to deal with Necessity—that which is beyond human control. For Gregory, the problem is as much suffering as death. That death is the cure for suffering may be an irony reflecting Gregory's own preoccupations, but the model for dealing with both death and suffering is that of sacrifice: to submit willingly to the inevitable ordination of God, and to be transformed by the alignment of one's will with God's. This dialectical movement of embracing the negative to attain the positive, of suffering the compunction of fear to rise to the compunction of joy, of enduring adversity to gain prosperity, or of dying to be reborn anew is a pattern found on many levels of Gregory's thought. As he writes in *Moralia* 24.11.34:

> All these things God works three times in everyone (Job 33.29), namely conversion, the trial by temptation, and death. For in these three, one first suffers sharp pains of grief, and is afterwards comforted by the great joys of security. But because the minds of the Elect suffer in each of these three stages, that is in the pain of conversion, the trial of temptation, or the fear of dissolution [at death], *and is purified and set free by this very suffering,* it is appropriately added: "That He may recall their souls from corruption and enlighten them with the light of the living" (Job 33.80).[81]

To recall from "corruption" to "the light of the living" is to move from death to rebirth. These stages which structure Christian life are all types of deaths and transformations.[82] What is crucial is that Christians align their wills with God's ordination in sacrifice to accomplish this transformation. The pattern of self-abnegation in conversion and the trial of ascetic life is also the pattern of abnegation requisite to facing death. Paul sacrificed himself for Christ in his conversion, saying, "It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me" (Gal. 2.20). This sacrifice of self brings a transformation and transcendence of one's merely human identity. As Gregory explains: "Unless someone foresakes himself, he is not

able to draw near to the one who is above him. He cannot embrace what is beyond him if he does not know how to sacrifice himself."[83] We must be one with Christ to conquer death with him;[84] we become one by the transformative union accomplished through sacrifice. Facing death, Paul longed to die for Christ, and this meant a paradoxical transformation of the will. Paul "hated his own life by loving it," that is, by delivering himself up to death for Jesus, so that he might raise it from the death of sin to life.[85] Peter experiences a similar paradox of willing. "He could not have suffered for Christ had he been utterly unwilling. By the power of the spirit, he loved the martyrdom which by the weakness of the flesh he did not will. While he feared the suffering in his body, in his spirit he exulted over the glory. So it came about that he willed the torment of martyrdom even as he was unwilling," Gregory writes. He explains that this is like drinking bitter medicine, which is unpleasant, to restore the health that is pleasant.[86] These paradoxical struggles of the will, which the saints experience, explicate Christ's own passion facing death for us: Christ "freely willed to yield to the death to which we come unwillingly."[87] Christ conquers death by freely submitting to divine ordination, to Necessity.

Only when Christians have made a sacrifice can they hope to conquer death. Fear can grip anyone, the timid or the proud. Fear works in a salutary way when the will is set straight to conform with God's will (orthothelitism), and this is a sacrifice, as Paul says in Rom. 12.1: "We must offer ourselves to him: a living sacrifice, dedicated and fit for acceptance." Christians have transformed the will to embrace suffering; even dreadful death becomes an act of will. Bishop Cassius of Narni, mentioned above, spends his whole life sacrificially. His death is one of exquisite tranquility and control, as are the other good deaths in the *Dialogues.* Gregory likens Cassius's death to that of Christ, who said, " 'It is finished,' bowed his head and gave up the ghost" (John 19.30). "What the Lord did by his power, his servant did through his vocation," that is, through his willing response to God's call.[88]

As the saints come to will what is unwilling, even as Christ did, they too will conquer death in sacrificial obedience. Paradoxically, by embracing and cultivating the fear of death, they can triumph over death. As Gregory writes: "So death itself will be defeated when it comes, if we always fear it before it comes.[89]

Good deaths are a matter of degree, like the holiness for which they are a reward. The bloody martyrdom of persecution may no longer be possible, although the disorders of the times may allow one to die in the adversities that are God's chastisements, and this is a good thing. The "secret martyrdom" of asceticism "in time of peace" is possible and highly esteemed. When one "slays one's desires" and "conquers [one's] heart," "God is appeased by this sacrifice, [and] at the time of his merciful judgment, he will approve of the victory of our peace."[90] Such an ascetic life is one of living death: holy men "pass through life daily undergoing death";[91] they despise the transitory for the sake of the eternal. But not everyone can be buried in the "grave" of contemplation, safe from sin and temptation.[92] Some must work in the world, but they can still preserve their inward holiness, like Count Theophanes, who dies in the odor of sanctity.[93]

As holiness is a matter of degree, so too salvation is a continuing process in Gregory. Even the good—indeed, especially the good—have feared death. While some might be granted visions of welcoming saints as consolation, others may endure a fierce battle with demons for possession of the soul. A terrifying death may purge the sinner of remaining sins; if more cleansing is necessary, a harder purification by fire awaits,[94] or perhaps some grimy tenure in the baths as a lowly attendant, as Gregory shows us in the *Dialogues.* Most important, death need not be faced on one's own resources alone, or even in one's own lifetime. Christians have the "blessing of the viaticum,"[95] martyrs and saints to intercede with God on their behalf,[96] and the community of the Church can continue to offer the sacrifice of the Eucharist after a Christian's death, that sacrifice which alone has power to change the status of the soul after death.[97] All these help us keep a balance: "Let our sins trouble us, without casting us into despair," Gregory writes. "Seek helpers and protectors. Even the one who is Judge *wants* to be asked [for forgiveness] so he will not have to punish sinners."[98] If we are "fearful in our confidence," we also have "help in our fear."[99]

Gregory's views mark a step in the evolution of Christian attitudes toward death. Gregory did not minimize the fear of death or deny its destructiveness, as earlier Fathers such as Ambrose had done. He went beyond Augustine, who had acknowledged that fear

of death was natural, if Christ could fear in Gethsemane.[100] For Gregory, death has become an extremely perilous crossing, even as the process of salvation has become a most uncertain struggle: one remains ignorant of the outcome of one's penitence, but still one knows it must be performed. Gregory cultivates the fear of death as necessary to purify the soul, conquering death by fear of death, yet such a strategy has its dangers of excess and despair. But hope could be restored knowing that the Christian did not face death alone. The Church, the *communio sanctorum,* takes on increasing responsibility for the fate of individuals, by providing sacraments, such as the viaticum, masses for the dead, and daily masses; by offering a community of the faithful praying for the deceased; and by providing saints to intercede for the departed. All become forces molding a weak soul into a state where the Christian comes to make that alignment and submission of will. The Christian is conforming his will with that of the community in the Lord's prayer and at the liturgy, which echoes, "Let Thy will be done." The plea of the Lord's prayer, "Deliver us from evil," is realized in the Christian life in the context of the community of the Church, which has made us "become one with the Ruler of the world" who is "alone free among the dead."[101] So in Paul's words, "in fear and trembling" one gains eternal life. The terror of death is not just the "natural" terror of Augustine, but has become itself useful blessing. Ironically, and paradoxically, it becomes a kind of consolation to the just to know the ubiquity of fear within that community of the saints. On the issue of death, as in so many other things, Gregory marks the transition from the late antique Church to that of the Middle Ages.

NOTES

1. *Ep.* 9.1 (*CCSL* 140A:563.20–21): "Quanto morti uicinior efficeris, tanto fieri sollicitior atque timidior debes."

2. Literature on the subject of death in early Christianity is surprisingly limited. The best work is Eric Rebillard, *In hora mortis: evolution de la pastorale chrétienne de la mort au IVe et Ve siècles* (Rome: École Française de Rome, 1994). Still useful is the study by Alfred Rush, *Death and Burial in Christian Antiquity,* Catholic University of America Studies in Christian Antiquity 1 (Washington, D.C.: Catholic Uni-

versity of America Press, 1941). See also Victor Saxer, *Morts, martyrs, et reliques en Afrique chrétienne aux premiers siècles,* Théologie historique 55 (Paris: Editions Beauchesne, 1980); Paul-Albert Février, "La mort chrétienne," in *Segni e riti nella Chiesa altomedievale occidentale,* 2 vols., Settimane di studio del Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo 33 (Spoleto, 1987), 2:881–942; Février, "La mort chrétienne: Images et vécu collectif," in *Histoire vécue du peuple chrétien,* ed. Jean Delumeau (Toulouse: Editions Privat, 1979), 75–104; Joseph Janssens, *Vita e morte del cristiano negli epitaffi di Roma anteriori al sec. VII* (Roma: Università Gregoriana Editrice, 1981); Michele Pellegrino, "Il cristiano antico e la morte," in *Ricerche patristiche (1938–1980),* 2 vols. (Turin: Bottega d'Erasmo, 1982), 2:275–78; and Joseph Ntedika, *L'évocation de l'au-delà dans la prière pour les morts: Etude de patristique et de liturgie latines (IVe–VIIIe siècles),* Recherches africaines de théologie 2 (Paris: Béatrice-Nauwelaerts, 1971). Several collections are important: *Le mystère de la mort et sa célébration,* Lex Orandi 12 (Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1951); *Morte e immortalità nella catechesi dei Padri del IIIo–IVo secolo,* ed. Sergio Felici, Biblioteca di scienze religiose 66 (Roma: Las, 1985); *Death in the Middle Ages,* ed. Herman Braet and Werner Werbeke (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1983); *Le temps chrétien de la fin de l'antiquité au moyen âge IIIe–XIIIe siècles,* Colloques internationaux du CNRS (Paris: Editions du CNRS, 1984); *Le sentiment de la mort au moyen âge: Etudes médiévales de l'Université de Montréal* (Montreal: Aurore, 1979); *Jenseitsvorstellungen im Antike und Christentum: Gedenkschrift für Alfred Stuiber,* Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum Erganzungband 9 (Münster: Aschendorffsche Verlagsbuchandlung, 1982). Frederick Paxton, *Christianizing Death: The Creation of a Ritual Process in Early Medieval Europe* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), has a chapter on the sixth century but is otherwise devoted to the evolution of early medieval liturgical practices. Also later but useful are Michel Vovelle, *Mourir autrefois: Attitudes collectives devant la mort aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles* (France: Editions Gallimard/Julliard, 1974); and *Dies Illa: Death in the Middle Ages,* ed. Jane H. M. Taylor, Proceedings of the 1983 Manchester Colloquium (Liverpool: Francis Cairns, 1984). Treating earlier material, the following works are also very informative: Françoise Hinard, *La mort, les morts, et l'au-delà dans le monde romain* (Caen: Université de Caen, 1987); and the collection *La mort, les morts dans les sociétés anciennes,* ed. Gherardo Gnoli et Jean Pierre Vernant (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977).

3. The literature of anthropologists as well as scholars of religion has made this point abundantly clear. For example, see *Leben und Tod*

in den Religionen: Symbol und Wirklichkeit, ed. Gunther Stephenson (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1980); Louis-Vincent Thomas, *Anthropologie de la mort* (Paris: Payot, 1975); Vladimir Jankelevitch, *La mort* (France: Flammarion, 1977); *Death and the Regeneration of Life,* ed. Maurice Bloch and Jonathan Parry (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982); *Religious Encounters with Death: Insights from the History and Anthropology of Religions,* ed. Frank E. Reynolds and Earle H. Waugh (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1977); Keith Hopkins, *Death and Renewal* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

4. This is the argument advanced by Ernest Becker, *The Denial of Death* (New York: Free Press, 1973).

5. The Socratic theme of treating life as a preparation for death is enunciated most succinctly in Plato's *Phaedo,* cf. 63e–64a, 67d, and is reiterated in Cicero, *Tusc.* 1.30.74. Stoics continue this theme; cf. Epictetus, *Ench.* 22; see J. M. Rist, *Stoic Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969). It becomes a key theme in monasticism; see Adalbert de Vogüé, "Avoir la mort devant les yeux chaque jour comme un événement imminent," *Collectanea Cisterciensia* 48 (1986): 267–78.

6. Articles on Gregory's eschatology are listed in Robert Godding, *Bibliografia di Gregorio Magno 1890–1989* (Rome: Città Nuova Editrice, 1990), items 1166–94 and 2136–56; especially useful are Giorgio Cracco, "Gregorio e l'oltretomba," in Fontaine et al., *Grégoire,* 255–61, on the sources and cultural background of Gregory's view of the afterlife, which include the *Vitae Patrum,* the *Topographia christiana* of Cosma Indicopleust, and the apocryphal *Apocalypse of Paul.* See also Dagens, *Grégoire,* 345–430; and J. P. McClain, *The Doctrine of Heaven in the Writing of Saint Gregory the Great* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1956). I have not been able to obtain Ignatius Fonasch, *The Doctrine of Eternal Punishment in the Writing of Saint Gregory the Great* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1952). I have found no work treating Gregory's attitudes toward death *in extenso.* Alfred Rush treats a limited theme in "An Echo of Christian Antiquity in St. Gregory the Great: Death a Struggle with the Devil," *Traditio* 3 (1945): 369–79. Useful observations can be found in Jean Riviere, *Le dogme de la rédemption après saint Augustin* (Paris: Gabalda, 1930), 187–231; Pearse Cusack, "Gregory and Time," paper delivered at the Eleventh International Conference on Patristic Studies, Oxford, 19–24 August 1991; and Pierre Boglioni, "La scène de la mort dans les premières hagiographies latines," in *Le sentiment de la mort au moyen âge,* 183–210. Of Chris-

tian sources, Ambrose and Augustine seem to have shaped Gregory's attitudes toward death the most strongly. Cassian, who has often a great influence on Gregory, influences him directly on death. Of classical sources, Cicero's *Tusculan Disputations* and Seneca's *Dialogues* (directly or mediated through Ambrose) are probable influences.

7. *Ep.* 9.220 (*CCSL* 140A:790–92). On this theme, which is interwoven with the idea of death as birth, see Rush, *Death and Burial,* 72–87. The transvaluation of this life as death and death as true life is a familiar Christian topos; cf. Phil. 1.21. It is also a Platonic notion carried into the Latin tradition through Cicero, *Tusc.* 1.31.75.

8. *Hom.Ez.* 2.10.16 (*CCSL* 142:391.402–18), an exegesis of Phil. 2.21: "*Omnes quae sua sunt quaerunt, non quae sunt Iesu Christi.* Idem uero Paulus cum electis fratribus non sibi ministrare, sed Domino, et uiuendo et moriendo festinabat, dicens: *Nemo nostrum sibi uiuit,et nemo sibi moritur. Siue enim uiuimus, Domino uiuimus, siue morimur, Domini sumus* (Rom. 14.7–8). Sibi etenim Sancti nec uiuunt nec moriuntur. Sibi non uiuunt, quia per omne quod agunt, ad lucra spiritalia anhelant atque orando, praedicando, sanctis operibus insistendo, caelestis patriae ciues multiplicare desiderant. Sibi minime moriuntur, quia in conspectu hominum Deum de sua morte glorificant, ad quem peruenire etiam moriendo festinant. Pensemus itaque, in morte Sanctorum non quantum eorum opprobrium ab infidelibus fuit, sed quanta laus Domini in corde fidelium excreuit. Qui si suam laudem quaererent, profecto pati tot opprobria in morte timuissent. Sed nemo nostrum sibi uiuit et nemo sibi moritur, quia suam gloriam nec uiuendo nec moriendo quaesierunt." On the centrality of sacrifice in Gregory's thought, see Straw, *Gregory,* especially 179–93.

9. *Mor.* 11.17.26 (*CCSL* 143A:601.1–2, 14–17), an exegesis of Job 12.22: "*Qui reuelat profunda de tenebris et producit in lucem umbram mortis* . . . Ista etenim mors in qua caro separatur ab anima umbra illius mortis est in qua anima separatur a Deo. In lucem ergo umbra mortis producitur cum, intellecta morte spiritus, mors carnis minime timetur."

10. For death as the dissolution of the flesh, see *Mor.* 4.16.31 (*CCSL* 143:183–84), 24.11.32 (*CCSL* 143B:1211–12), 24.11.33 (*CCSL* 143B:1212), 24.11.34 (*CCSL* 143B:1213). This is a Platonic idea transmitted through Cicero, *Tusc.* 1.9.18–19.

11. Cf. *Mor.* 5.31.54 (*CCSL* 143:255), 18.18.29 (*CCSL* 143A:903); *Hom.Ev.* 1.12.2 (*PL* 76.1119D); *Dial.* 4.37.4 (*SC* 265:126). This idea goes back to Homer and the Greeks; cf. Erwin Rohde, *Psyche: The Cult of Souls and Belief in Immortality among the Greeks* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1925), 28, 140. For this theme in the Fathers, see Rush, *Death and Burial,* 1–22.

12. *Dial.* 4.40.3 (*SC* 265:140); *Hom.Ev.* 2.35.8 (*PL* 76:1264); *Dial.* 4.47.3 (*SC* 265:166).

13. *Hom.Ev.* 2.35.8 (*PL* 76:1264).

14. *Dial.* 4.37.5–6 (*SC* 265:128). The judge says, "Non hunc deduci, sed Stephanum ferrarium iussi," but it is not clear who guided the soul to the next world.

15. Here Jewish tradition, which views death as an unnatural irruption in the scheme of things, is grafted onto Platonic traditions. See Oscar Cullman's essay on death in the New Testament in *Immortality and Resurrection,* ed. Krister Stendhal (New York: MacMillan, 1965), 19–21.

16. Cf. *Mor.* 4.16.30 (*CCSL* 143:182–83); *Hom.Ev.* 2.25.8 (*PL* 76: 1194–95); *Mor.* 14.17.20 (*CCSL* 143A:709). That death is a punishment for sin is emphasized in Augustine's debate with Pelagians; see Rebillard, *In hora mortis*, 29–50.

17. *Mor.* 4.16.30 (*CCSL* 143:182–83).

18. Cf. *Mor.* 24.11.32 (*CCSL* 143B:1211), 9.13.20 (*CCSL* 143:471), 4.16.31 (*CCSL* 143:183–84); *Ep.* 11.23 (*CCSL* 140A:894).

19. Such views of death's finitude echo the classical tradition going back to Homer's *Iliad,* which presents death as the end of all mortal happiness. Recent scholarship has revealed continuities of early Christian tradition with classical themes of death's finitude and the grief of the living for the dead, especially as evident in epitaphs. See Eric Rebillard, "Death as a Good: Homilies and Epitaphs," paper delivered at the North American Patristics Society Conference, Loyola University, 29 May 1992; Gabriel Sanders, *Lapides memores: Païens et chrétiens face à la mort: Le témoignage de l'épigraphie funéraire latine,* Epigrafia e Antichita 11 (Faenze: Fratelli Lega, 1991); Sanders, "L'épitaphe latine paienne et chrétienne: La synchronie des discours sur la mort," *Acta of the VIIIth International Congress on Greek and Latin Epigraphy* (Athens, 1984), 181–218; Janssens, *Vita e morte del cristiano negli epitaffi,* especially 65–100; Février, "La mort chrétienne: Images," 77–78. For comparisons, see Richmond Lattimore, *Themes in Greek and Latin Epitaphs* (Urbana: University of Illinois, 1962); and A. Brelich, *Aspetti della morte nelle iscrizioni sepolcrali dell'impero romano* (Budapest: Magyar Nemzeti Muzeum, 1937).

20. *Ep.* 9.161 (*CCSL* 140A:720.17–18): "Quantalibet enim sit temporalis affluentia uel certe prosperitas, habet finem suum terminum mortis." Cf. *Mor.* 13.27.31 (*CCSL* 143A:686).

21. *Hom.Ev.* 2.39.8 (*PL* 76:1298D).

22. *Ep.* 7.7 (*CCSL* 140:454:19–20): "In qua et in nobismetipsis responsum mortis habemus, ut non simus fidentes in nobis."

23. Cf. Ambrose, *De bono mortis* 2.5, 4.14.

24. For death as the separation of soul from body, see *Mor.* 12.7.10 (*CCSL* 143A:634); *Dial.* 4.16.7 (*SC* 265:66); *Dial.* 4.15.1 (*SC* 265:58); *Hom.Ev.* 2.40.11 (*PL* 76:1312A). Cf. Ambrose, *De bono mortis* 2.5–7, 3.8; Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 13.2; Cicero, *Tusc.* 1.9.17.

25. *Hom.Ev.* 2.37.1 (*PL* 76:1275B): "quanta sint gaudia, angelorum choris interesse, cum beatissimis spiritibus gloriae conditoris assistere, praesentem Dei vultum cernere, incircumscriptum lumen videre, nullo mortis metu affici, incorruptionis perpetuae munere laetari?"

26. The theme of fear of death is traced carefully throughout Rebillard's dissertation. The Fathers before Augustine generally take the position that fear of death casts doubt on one's hope in the resurrection (cf. 1 Thess. 4.13). For this reason, fear of death is criticized; cf. Ambrose, *De Iacob et beata vita* 1.7.31. Ambrose also recognizes that it is not death itself but fear of punishment that makes us fear death; cf. *De bono mortis* 8.31–33. Augustine will acknowledge that fear of death is human and therefore permissible; even Christ felt fear in Gethsemane. Cf. *Sermo* 31.2.3 (*PL* 38:193–94); *Sermo* 305.2 (*PL* 38: 1398). See Eric Rebillard, "La détresse du mourant: sa valeur dans les sermons de Saint Augustin," *Revue des Études Latines* 69 (1991): 147–65; and Donald S. Burt, "Augustine on the Authentic Approach to Death," *Augustinianum* 28 (1988): 527–63.

27. *Hom.Ev.* 1.14.1 (*PL* 76:1127C–28A).

28. *Hom.Ev.* 2.27.9 (*PL* 76:1210): "Placatur Deus isto sacrificio, approbat in judicio pietatis suae victoriam pacis nostrae." See also *Hom.Ev.* 2.32.4 (*PL* 76:1235A–36A), 2.35.7 (*PL* 76:1263B–D), 1.11.1 (*PL* 76:1114D–15C); 1.3.4 (*PL* 76:1089A). Martyrdom in time of peace is especially associated with the virtue of patience.

29. *Ep.* 10.14 (*CCSL* 140A:841.12): "corruptionis carcere"; cf. *Ep.* 13.24 (*CCSL* 140A:1025.13): "carnis carcere." Other letters reflecting his attitude toward illness or his longing for death are: *Ep.* 9.102 (*CCSL* 140A:654), 9.148 (*CCSL* 140A:699), 9.174 (*CCSL* 140A:731), 9.176 (*CCSL* 140A:733), 9.228 (*CCSL* 140A:804), 9.232 (*CCSL* 140A:814), 10.14 (*CCSL* 140A:840–41), 11.26 (*CCSL* 140A:899), 12.16 (*CCSL* 140A:990), 13.24 (*CCSL* 140A:1025); also Appendix 9 (*CCSL* 140A: 1102).

30. *Ep.* 11.20 (*CCSL* 140A:890.13–16): "Sed breuiter dico quia sic me infectio noxii humoris inbibit, ut uiuere mihi poena sit, sed mortem desideranter exspectem, quam gemitibus meis solam esse credo posse remedium."

31. *Ep.* 13.24 (*CCSL* 140A:1025.9–14): "Ego autem in tanto gemitu et occupationibus uiuo, ut ad dies quos ago me peruenisse paeniteat

solaque mihi in consolatione sit mortis exspectatio. Vnde peto ut pro me orare debeatis, quatenus de hoc carnis carcere citius educar, ne tantis laboribus diutius torquear."

32. *Ep.* 11.20 (*CCSL* 140A:890).

33. *Dial.* 4.1.2 (*SC* 265:18).

34. Various areas of doubt are identified by Marc Van Uytanghe in "Scepticisme doctrinal au seuil du moyen âge? Les objections du diacre Pierre dans les *Dialogues* de Grégoire le Grand," in Fontaine et al., *Grégoire,* 315–26. They include thaumaturgy, the existence of angels and demons, the immortality of the soul, resurrection, and the punishments of hell.

35. *Ep.* 9.220 (*CCSL* 140A:791). Here Gregory may be following Ambrose; see above, note 26.

36. *Hom.Ev.* 1.12.2 (*PL* 76:1119D).

37. Cf. *Dial.* 4.15.1 (*SC* 265:58), where the elect are visited by angels that preserve them from the normal feeling of pain at the separation of soul and body.

38. *Mor.* 12.7.10 (*CCSL* 142A:634).

39. *Ep.* 11.26 (*CCSL* 140A:899.33).

40. *Mor.* 4.16.30 (*CCSL* 143:182–83).

41. *Mor.* 7.15.18 (*CCSL* 143:346.20–22): the good soul "transire et per mortem appetit ut obtinere uitam plenius possit; funditus in infimis exstingui desiderat quo uerius summa conscendat."

42. *Mor* 12.11.15 (*CCSL* 143A:637.14–15): "Quod enim occidimus, agimus ut penitus non sit."

43. *Mor* 13.27.31 (*CCSL* 143A:686.2–7): "Omne quod transit breue est, etiam si tardius terminari uideatur. In mortis autem semita per quam non reuertimur, ambulamus; non quod ad uitam carnis minime resurgendo reducimur, sed quod ad labores huius uitae mortalis, uel ad conquirenda laboribus praemia, iterum non uenimus."

44. See below, note 88. The theme of the peaceful, philosophical death is found particularly in early monastic sources; see Rebillard, "La pastorale," 1:16–37.

45. On the struggle for the soul at death, see *Hom.Ev.* 2.39.8 (*PL* 76:1298C–99D); *Dial.* 4.19.3 (*SC* 265:72–74). On the apocalyptic struggle and need to repent, see *Hom.Ev.* 1.1.3–6 (*PL* 76:1079–81); *Ep.* 3.29 (*CCSL* 140:175), 3.61 (*CCSL* 140:210). Rush points out the connection between viewing individual death as a struggle of demons and angels for the soul and Gregory's conviction that the end of the world is at hand; see Rush, "An Echo of Christian Antiquity," 369. The theme of death as a struggle with the devil is frequent in martyrs' lives. Dagens, *Grégoire,* 401–30, argues that Gregory has stronger eschatological

beliefs than Augustine (409n.30): this is explained in detail by Giuseppe Cremascoli, *"Novissima hominis" nei "Dialogi" di Gregorio Magno* (Bologna: Patron, 1979), 39–49.

46. *Mor.* 11.17.26 (*CCSL* 143A:601).

47. *Hom.Ev.* 2.39.8 (*PL* 76:1298C–99D). Cf. Augustine, *Sermo* 344.4 (*PL* 39:1513–15); *De civitate Dei* 19.28. On this theme, see Joseph Plumpe, *Mors secunda: Mélanges Joseph De Ghellink I,* Museum Lessianum, Section historique 13 (Gembloux: Duculot, 1951), 387–403.

48. *Dial.* 4.3.2 (*SC* 265:24.16–18): "Caro nec in reprobis inter supplicia perfecte deficit, quia semper deficiendo subsistit."

49. *Mor* 11.17.26 (*CCSL* 143A:601).

50. *Hom.Ev.* 2.37.1 (*PL* 76:1275A–B): "Terrena namque substantia supernae felicitati comparata pondus est, non subsidium. Temporalis vita aeternae vitae comparata mors est potius dicenda quam vita. Ipse enim quotidianus defectus corruptionis quid est aliud quam quaedam prolixitas mortis?"

51. *Hom.Ez.* 1.4.6 (*CCSL* 142:52.170–71), 2.9.5 (*CCSL* 142:360.182).

52. *Ep* 9.220 (*CCSL* 140A:791.11).

53. For Gregory's views on Hell, see Dagens, *Grégoire,* 410–29; Gustav Bardy, *Les Pères de l'Église en face des problèmes posés par l'enfer* (Paris, 1950), 145–239; and Ignatius Fonash, *Doctrine of Eternal Punishment in the Writings of St. Gregory the Great.* See also Piero Camporesi, *The Fear of Hell,* trans. Lucinda Byatt (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1990), a study of the social meaning of early modern visions of Hell. Camporesi argues that the "dark prison" and "gloomy enclosures of hell" of Gregory's Hell were transformed into "horrendous excremental drains" (12). Gregory's Hell follows patristic traditions, which in turn depend on the vision of the underworld elaborated in Virgil's *Aeneid.* See above, note 6.

54. *Mor.* 8.12.27 (*CCSL* 143:400.11–12). Who would this *ultor* be? See also *Mor.* 23.10.33 (*CCSL* 143B:1212): "Solutioni ergo carnis appropinquans, nonnumquam terrore uindictae etiam iusti anima turbatur." See also *Mor.* 24.11.34 (*CCSL* 143B:1213.281–82): "Sed quia iustorum animae a leuibus quibusque contagiis ipso saepe mortis pauore purgantur." See also *Dial.* 4.47.3 (*SC* 265:166).

55. See Straw, *Gregory,* 210n.106.

56. *Hom.Ev.* 1.13.6 (*PL* 76:1126C): "Et cum certa mors maneat omnibus, nolite de temporalis vitae providentia incerta cogitare."

57. *Mor.* 24.11.32 (*CCSL* 143B:1211.217–23). The extended passage is worth citing: "Etsi cuncta praua opera, quae intelligere potuit, deuitauit, uenturus tamen coram districto iudice, illa magis quae in semetipso non intellegit, pertimescit. Quis enim considerare ualeat

quanta mala per momenta temporum ipsis inconstantibus cogitationum motibus perpetramus? Facile est autem opera peruersa uitare, sed nimis difficile est ab illicita cogitatione cor tergere."

58. *Mor.* 24.11.32 (*CCSL* 143B:1211); *Hom.Ev.* 2.37.7 (*PL* 76:1278C).

59. *Mor.* 12.17.21 (*CCSL* 143A:641–42).

60. *Dial.* 4.47.3 (*SC* 265:168.20–21).

61. *Hom.Ev.* 2.39.8 (*PL* 76.1299C–D).

62. *Hom.Ev.* 1.13.5 (*PL* 76.1126B).

63. I have endeavored to trace Stoic influences on Gregory's thought in Straw, *Gregory* (see especially chaps. 1 and 12). Stoic influences have also been noted by Dagens, *Grégoire,* passim. See also Marcia Colish, *The Stoic Tradition from Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages,* 2 vols., Studies in the History of Christian Thought 35 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1985), 2:252–66.

64. *Mor.* 12.38.42 (*CCSL* 143A:653.8–54.14): "In uita carnis fiduciam ponit, eaque diu permanere existimat quae ad praesens tenet. Solidatur in elatione animus, in despectu adducitur omnis propinquus, quam repentina mors subrepat numquam considerat; quam sit eius incerta felicitas numquam pensat. Qui si incertitudinem fugacis uitae conspiceret, incerta pro certo nequaquam teneret."

65. *Mor.* 12.51.57 (*CCSL* 143A:663.21).

66. *Mor.* 12.52.58 (*CCSL* 143A:663.7), citing Prov. 24.9.

67. *Ep.* 7.22 (*CCSL* 140:474.39–40, 47–48). "Quae dies quousque ueniat, semper suspecta, semper trepida metuere culpas debes atque eas cotidianis fletibus lauare . . . Perpende, dulcissima filia, quia mater neglegentiae solet esse securitas."

68. *Hom.Ev.* 1.13.6 (*PL* 76:1126B–C): "Horam vero ultimam Dominus noster idcirco voluit nobis esse incognitam, ut semper possit esse suspecta, ut dum illam praevidere non possumus, ad illam sine intermissione praeparemur."

69. *Mor.* 24.11.32 (*CCSL* 143B:1212). Here Gregory follows Augustine; see note 26 above.

70. *Mor.* 24.11.32 (*CCSL* 143B:1211.237–1212.241, 1212.244–46): "et cum de his omnibus semper districta iudicia pertimescant, tunc tamen haec uehementer metuunt, cum ad soluendum humanae conditionis debitum uenientes, districto iudici propinquare se cernunt. Et fit tanto timor acrior, quanto et retributio aeterna uicinior . . . Crescit pauor uicina retributione iustitiae, et urguente solutione carnis, quanto magis districtum iudicium iamiamque quasi tangitur, tanto uehementius formidatur."

71. *Dial.* 4.48.1 (*SC* 265:168).

72. *Dial.* 4.48.1 (*SC* 265:168.1–3), 4.24.1–2 (*SC* 265:80–82).

73. *Hom.Ev.* 2.37.6 and especially 2.37.10 (*PL* 76:1278A–C, 1281B–D).

74. See Straw, *Gregory*, especially 186–93, 231–35.

75. *Hom.Ev.* 2.37.7 (*PL* 76:1279A).

76. *Dial.* 4.60.1 (*SC* 265:200); *Hom.Ev.* 2.37.9 (*PL* 76:1279C).

77. *Hom.Ev.* 2.37.9 (*PL* 76:1279C).

78. *Hom.Ev.* 2.34.5 (*PL* 76:1248); also see Straw, *Gregory*, 213–35.

79. *Dial.* 4.58.1–2 (*SC* 265:194–96); God promised the bishop that on the Apostle's Day, Cassius would come to him and God would "pay his wages" ("retribuo tibi mercedem tuam"; see also *Hom.Ev.* 2.37.9: "retribuam tibi mercedem tuam" [*PL* 76:1279C, 1280B–C]). On hearing this, the bishop's devotion increased, and he who had been debtor to the Lord now began to have the Lord under obligation to him, because of his promise ("factusque est tam fortis in opere quam certus ex munere, quippe qui eum, cui ipse debitor fuerat, ex ea promissione jam coeperat habere debitorem" [*PL* 76:1280C]).

80. *Mor.* 8.12.28 (*CCSL* 143:401.19–20): "Sed haec ipsa humanae breuitatis consideratio auctori nostro magnae uirtutis oblatio est."

81. *Mor.* 24.11.34–12.35 (*CCSL* 143B:1213–14): "*Haec omnia operatur Deus tribus uicibus per singulos* (Job 33.39), uidelicet conuersionis, probationis et mortis; quia per tria haec, et duris primum stimulis maeroris afficitur, et magnis postmodum securitatis gaudiis refouetur.

"Et quia electi uniuscuiusque mens iisdem tribus uicibus, id est uel labore conuersionis, uel temptatione probationis, uel formidine solutionis atteritur, atque ipsa attritione purgata liberatur, apte subiungitur: *Vt reuocet animas eorum a corruptione et illuminet luce uiuentium* (Job 33.30)."

82. Beginning with Arnold Van Gennep, anthropologists have pointed out that death is often viewed as a rite of passage; see Arnold Van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960; originally published 1909). See also Thomas, *Anthropologie de la mort*; Richard Huntington and Peter Metcalf, *Celebrations of Death* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979); Jack Goody, *Death, Property and the Ancestors* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1962); Loring M. Danforth, *The Death Rituals of Rural Greece* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982).

83. *Hom.Ev.* 2.32.2 (*PL* 76:1234A): "Quia nisi quis a semetipso deficiat, ad eum qui super ipsum est non appropinquat; nec valet apprehendere quod ultra ipsum est, si nescierit mactare quod est."

84. *Hom.Ev.* 2.22.6 (*PL* 76:1177A–D).

85. *Hom.Ev.* 2.37.3 (*PL* 76:1276B): "Ecce quomodo animam suam amando oderat, imo odiens amabat, quam cupiebat pro Jesu morti tradere, ut hanc ad vitam de peccati morte suscitaret."

86. *Hom.Ev.* 1.3.3 (*PL* 76.1087C–88A), an exegesis of John 21.18: "*Cum senueris, extendes manus tuas, et alius te cinget, et ducet quo*

tu non vis. Neque enim si plenissime Petrus nollet pro Christo pati potuisset, sed martyrium, quod per infirmitatem carnis noluit, per virtutem spiritus amavit. Qui dum per carnem ad poenas trepidat, per spiritum ad gloriam exsultat; actumque est ut cruciatum martyrii nolendo voluisset. Sic nos quoque cum gaudium quaerimus salutis, amarum poculum sumimus purgationis. Amaritudo quidem in poculo displicet, sed restituenda per amaritudinem salus placet."

87. *Hom.Ev.* 2.22.4 (*PL* 76:1176C): "Ipse sponte morti succumbere voluit, ad quam nos venimus inviti."

88. *Hom.Ev.* 2.37.9 (*PL* 76:1281B): "Quod ergo Dominus ex postestate, hoc egit famulus ex vocatione." Gregory believes that human free will must respond to and cooperate with divine grace. See Straw, *Gregory*, 139–41.

89. *Hom.Ev.* 1.13.6 (*PL* 76.1127A): "Sic enim sic mors ipsa cum venerit vincetur, si priusquam veniat semper timeatur."

90. *Hom.Ev.* 2.27.9 (*PL* 76:1210B): "Placatur Deus isto sacrificio, approbat in judicio pietatis suae victoriam pacis nostrae." See also *Hom.Ev.* 2.32.4 (*PL* 76:1235A–36A), 2.35.7 (*PL* 76:1263B–D), 1.11.1 (*PL* 76:1115B–C), 1.3.4 (*PL* 76:1089A).

91. *Mor.* 7.30.45 (*CCSL* 143:368.163–66): "Vnde et sancti uiri, quia breuitatem uitae indesinenter aspiciunt, quasi cotidie morientes uiuunt; et tanto se solidius mansuris praeparant quanto et nulla esse transitoria semper ex fine pensant."

92. *Mor* 5.6.9. (*CCSL* 143:224–25).

93. *Hom.Ev.* 2.36.13 (*PL* 76:1273D–74B); *Dial.* 4.28.4 (*SC* 265:96–98).

94. For Gregory's importance in the development of the idea of purgatory, see Jacques Le Goff, *The Birth of Purgatory,* trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 88–95; R. R. Atwell, "From Augustine to Gregory the Great: An Evaluation of the Emergence of the Doctrine of Purgatory," *JEH* 38 (1987): 173–86; Peter McEnierny, "Pope Gregory I and Purgatory," *Australian Catholic Record* 49 (1972): 314–20.

95. *Ep.* 9.1 (*CCSL* 140A:563): Should accidents befall excommunicants, they should not be deprived of the *benedictione viatici;* cf. *Ep.* 13.46 (*CCSL* 140A:1053–54) and 9.25 (*CCSL* 140A:585). See also *Hom.Ev.* 2.40.11 (*PL* 76.1311C); and *Dial.* 4.16.7 (*SC* 265:66), where Redempta calls for and receives the viaticum on her deathbed. See G. Grabka, "Christian Viaticum: A Study of Its Cultural Background," *Traditio* 9 (1953): 1–43; Eric Rebillard, "La naissance du viatique: Se préparer à mourir en Italie et en Gaule aux IVe et Ve siècles" *Medievales* 20 (1991): 99–108.

96. *Hom.Ev.* 2.32.8 (*PL* 76:1238B–C).

97. *Dial.* 4.57.1–2 (*SC* 265:184).

98. *Hom.Ev.* 2.32.8 (*PL* 76:1238C): "Hos protectores vestri reatus invenite, quia ne punire peccatores debeat, rogari vult et ipse qui judicat."

99. *Hom.Ev.* 2.32.8 (*PL* 76:1238C): "Sic peccata nostra perturbent, ut mens in desperationem non proruat, quia etsi praesumentes metuimus, et metuentes speramus."

100. See Rebillard, *In hora mortis*, 73–75; Rebillard, "La détresse du mourant." Augustine also sees the moral value of fear, but for him it does not become the foundation of a penitential outlook on life, as it does for Gregory.

101. *Hom.Ev.* 2.39.9 (*PL* 76:1299D).

3

CONRAD LEYSER

Expertise and Authority in Gregory the Great: The Social Function of Peritia

> No one presumes to teach a skill, unless they have first learnt it themselves through close study. With what rash presumption then is the office of pastoral teaching undertaken by those who have no expertise, seeing that the government of souls is the skill of skills. (Nulla ars doceri praesumitur, nisi intenta prius meditatione discatur. Ab imperitis ergo pastorale magisterium qua temeritate suscipitur, quando ars est artium regimen animarum.)
>
> Gregory the Great

Few have presumed to doubt the consummate skill of Pope Gregory the Great as a governor of souls. At the same time, little agreement has been reached among scholars and theologians as to the precise character of Gregory's pastoral achievements. On the one hand, we find praise for his depth as a spiritual writer, on the other, admiration for his vigor as a civic leader. Most accounts find it difficult to keep these roles in simultaneous focus. The evidence for both is abundant: Gregory took equal pains to ensure the survival of his biblical exegesis and of his business letters. His modern exegetes, by contrast, tend to draw on one or the other set of texts in evoking his prowess. The assumption prevails that Gregory could not readily have combined spiritual insight and practical expertise, despite his assertion that the *regimen animarum* was the skill comprehending all skills.[1]

The sense of incompatibility between the public man of action and the private contemplative derives, paradoxically, from Gregory's own representation of his career. In texts of all genres, espe-

cially those produced in his first year as pope (from April 590), Gregory bemoaned the burden of office and mourned the loss of the undisturbed life of prayer he had once enjoyed as a monk.[2] Continental historiography has concluded that he wished to cloister himself from involvement in the political order: the saintly, sickly pope is seen to have willed himself out of history into a monumental status as the last of the great Latin Fathers.[3] More recently, Gregory has been seen as a holy man in power against his will. He became pope "in spite of himself"; in office he was "anxious, anguished, tired."[4]

Meanwhile, Gregory's English biographers have taken the view that his monastic conversion was a personal matter, one that did not impinge upon the business of government. The precise terms of his relation to earlier Fathers, so carefully monitored in French and German scholarship, are largely ignored. What counts is the letters: in the *Register,* Gregory is seen to have turned administrative skills gained in secular government over to the reorganization of papal affairs, and indeed to have salvaged public order as Byzantine interest in Italy contracted. In this perspective, Gregory's title to power appears unproblematic, a function of his office and of his social position. The problems he encountered are seen to have arisen from the practical limits of his authority, in the face of imperial apathy and Lombard aggression.[5]

Both these schools of thought—which we may call the "spiritualized" and the "secularized" versions of Gregory's career—fundamentally accept the Gregorian claim to discontinuity between public and private roles. However, such a ready assent to the letter of what Gregory says may largely misapprehend its spirit.

If taken together, Gregory's spiritual writings and the *Register* suggest a man fascinated by the theory and the practice of authority—its deep structure and the minutiae of its application. The tension he expressed between contemplative inquiry and the fulfillment of administrative duty was a creative rather than a debilitating force. Far from pulling him apart, Gregory's officeholding stimulated his preaching on Scripture: his appointment in 578 as papal *apocrisiarius* in Constantinople was the occasion for his beginning the *Moralia in Job.* In this sense, his election in 590 represented not a break in concentration but a further literary and pastoral opportunity. Although he had less time to revise and work up the

written texts of his sermons, Gregory was equally if not more prolific in his twelve years as pope than he had been in the 580s.[6]

Gregory's expressions of anguish at his election are thus not to be heeded as the distressed cries of an otherworldly ascetic suddenly thrust into the limelight. These declarations of vulnerability form part of what has been called "the rhetoric of reluctance" to power characteristic of all leaders, ascetic or otherwise, in the ancient world.[7] In this economy, only the leader who publicly disdains power can be trusted to exercise it safely. This is not to say that Gregory's vulnerability was "a mere topos," only that the problem did not reside in his soul. At stake was rather the political frailty of a Roman ascetic leader and his associates whose bold occupation of the Lateran palace threatened the customary monopoly of office enjoyed by the clerical establishment. The intensity of Gregory's laments on the burden of office can be understood partly to reflect the new pitch of rivalry within the Roman Church between entrenched clerical dynasties and a newly formed party of ascetics (see below).

The context for this rivalry, and the character of Gregory's formation as a monk, call for full discussion elsewhere.[8] Here my purpose is to suggest one reason why Gregory's interest in authority has been so widely misunderstood and, in positive terms, to examine what he understood to be the skill involved in the art of government.

Gregory often argued with reference to "experience," as Claude Dagens in particular has observed;[9] it is clear that "experience" for Gregory was a necessary attribute of those in authority. However, the semantic range of the Latin *experientia* and its cognates, and of Gregory's usage of these terms, is by no means self-evident. For twentieth-century readers of Gregory, the temptation to anachronism in translation is almost irresistible. Spiritualized accounts, of which Dagens's is the most sensitive example, have tended to understand here Gregory's "personal spiritual experience."[10] In presenting Gregory as a pastor who deliberately wrote from his own lived experience of Christian faith, Dagens successfully questioned the relevance of judging Gregory as an abstract theologian. By the same token, the limitations of such a use of the language of contemporary Catholic phenomenology in approaching a sixth-century lexicon bear exploration. Meanwhile in the secularized reading

of Gregory's career, "experience" is understood in the sense of "administrative expertise."[11] This gloss may be somewhat closer to the Latin, but it also lacks historical basis.

Gregory's interest in authority may only be understood if his language of "experience" is interpreted in its late antique contexts. I suggest here that what Gregory understood by *experientia* was neither precisely lived faith nor business acumen, but training as an ascetic. Reference to "experience" in this sense carried with it an appeal to long-standing ascetic tradition. As I shall show, Gregory derived his understanding of ascetic expertise, and his sense of how to transmit this to others, from a variety of monastic sources, especially the writings of John Cassian. Gregory's assimilation of Cassian's discussion of *experientia* enabled him to claim the authority of expertise, without falling prey to the accusation of ascetic elitism, which might have been leveled in particular by his clerical opponents in Rome.

Gregory the Great and the "Ascetic Invasion"

Our chances of understanding Gregory as an ascetic in the late Roman Mediterranean have been immeasurably increased by the work of Robert Markus. His recent study, *The End of Ancient Christianity,* marks and measures the route from the world of Ambrose and Augustine to that of Gregory. Gregory's universe was radically Christianized, his culture biblical: he made presumptions of the Christian community far more confidently than did Augustine, for whom the future of the Church was uncertain, and its relations with imperial power structures unclear.

This is not to say that by the late sixth century the empire had disappeared: the papal *Register* is "still heavy with the imperial past."[12] But as Gregory showed in the *Dialogues,* it was also possible to ignore the empire: the *Dialogues* map Italy as an exclusively Christian landscape, full of *sancti* and their followers, virtually obliterating its identity as an imperial province. Such a shift in cultural perspective has partly to do with successive barbarian incursions into the empire; more important in Markus's account is what he calls "the ascetic invasion."[13] In the western provinces at least, ascetics rose to public prominence, both as charismatics and as officeholders in the Church. In the fourth century, the idea of a monk like Gregory in civic office as a bishop would have been a

novelty; it was practically a commonplace two centuries later. Such men could do more cultural damage to the fabric of the old imperial order than barbarian war bands. It was in the interests of, for example, the Ostrogoths to be seen to preserve the institutions and the cultural memory of the empire. In contrast, ascetics such as Gregory, trained in renunciation and otherworldliness, strove to publicize their ability to think beyond secular power structures, even as they took responsibility for their maintenance.

Markus sees the ascetic takeover of public power as reflecting a fundamental tension in the monastic movement over its social involvement. On the one hand monastic ascetics sought to live a perfect Christian life. They devised techniques to realize the Gospel injunctions, fasting, praying, if need be living alone. However, the determination to be perfect by any means necessary raised the question of social division: should individual ascetic purity be set above the perfection in charity of the whole community? On the other hand, then, ascetics aimed to calm suspicion of their elitism and to define monasticism as an inclusive rather than a divisive practice.

The dangers of spiritual elitism had always attended the practice of asceticism within Christian communities. As Markus reminds us, what now distinguished monastic ascetics was the explicit physical and institutional boundaries separating them from other believers.[14] Early Christian ascetics had for the most part stayed within the household and the city; in fourth-century Egypt and Syria, those seeking perfection fled "the world" literally, heading for the Desert. They abandoned the City as a place of worldly corruption—but not without ambivalence. The City also stood for the body of the faithful, with whom ascetics ultimately sought peace and unity. Monastic groups discussed with mounting urgency the consequences of their withdrawal for relations with the rest of the faithful. The "ascetic invasion" involved a newly explicit social commitment on the part of monks, as they moved from the Desert back into the City.[15]

Markus discerns at least four stages in this process. First, in the Latin West, it was perhaps Jerome who went furthest in advocating the individual perfectionism of the Desert. His strident exaltation of virginity, however, met with articulate opposition from other ascetics and married aristocrats alike.[16]

Second, the debate over marriage and virginity prompted in Augustine a rethinking of monastic theology. Alarmed by the social implications of the claim to special holiness on the basis of celibacy or other practices, Augustine drew a sharp distinction between "monasticism," a way of life fundamentally defined by charity, and "asceticism," which he saw as mere auxiliary technique. In the earthly city, Augustine argued, no amount of abstinent endeavor made it possible to tell if one was saved or not. The monastery became the venue whose defining function was to prefigure the perfect community of charity at the end of time, the City of God.[17]

Third, from the 420s John Cassian and his disciples in southern Gaul attempted to strike a balance between the Desert perfectionism of Jerome and the City emphasis on *caritas* of Augustine. Cassian's analysis softened the edges of the clear Augustinian distinction between monastic charity and ascetic technique, forming the durable amalgam "monastic asceticism."[18] In the terms I wish to explore here, Cassian was concerned to articulate a socially responsible notion of ascetic expertise, which he named *experientia* or *peritia.* He argued that there were secure procedures for the acquisition and recognition of holiness, and these were best carried out not in Desert solitude—the eremitic life—but in community. Hence come Cassian's definition of an urban cenobitic monasticism, his imaging of the *coenobium* as a gymnasium where all trained together, and, most important, his understanding that ascetics, once trained, would "leap out" from the cloister to guide the wider community of the faithful.[19]

Cassian's arbitration of the question of individual purity and communal charity was paradigmatic for later generations of Western monks. As the fourth stage in his account, Markus reintroduces little understood writers, such as Salvian of Marseille, Julianus Pomerius, and Caesarius of Arles, as they followed Cassian in deft and increasingly confident attempts to balance the demands of ascetic purity with the no less compelling ideal of (Augustinian) charity.[20] Monks became more willing to adopt a position of leadership in the Church and more able to convince their peers that they were, after all, acting in the common good. Meanwhile, the traditional mechanisms and structures of public government suffered as they were passed from hand to barbarian

hand. To Western aristocracies, in Francia in particular, it became more and more tempting to participate, or at least to acquiesce, in monastic claims to political authority. The presence of the monk-bishop became a familiar, if not necessarily a welcome, element in civic politics.

In *The End of Ancient Christianity,* Gregory appears "at the vanishing point" of the horizon.[21] He was born and grew up in a world and a city whose shape had changed, and his own sense of the alteration—"the unsteady flow"—of the times was palpable.[22] Gregory nonetheless was confident that he knew the direction of the course of events. "The present world hastens to its end. The closer it comes, the clearer the signs of the next world become, so clear we can almost touch the future. For the present, we can barely discern our neighbor's thoughts; in that future world we will be able to gaze transparently into each other's hearts. Is there a way to describe this world other than 'night'? And what is the world to come, if not 'daylight'?"[23] The distance between Gregory's faith and the ancient Christianity of Augustine is at its clearest here. As Markus above all others has shown, the fundamental premise of Augustine's theology of history was an agnostic one: it was impossible to tell how long the sixth age—the period between the Incarnation and the Second Coming—would last.[24] For Gregory, however, the last days were awesomely close; he worked under eschatological time pressure.

Gregory's sense of historical urgency differentiates him also from all the "ascetic invaders" discussed by Markus. More effectively, perhaps, than any previous monk in power in the Latin West, Gregory strove to reconfigure the debate over the place of monasticism in the Church. Earlier writers had phrased issues of ascetic elitism in terms of the divisive effects on Christian community: with a calculated singlemindedness, Gregory approached the question in terms of Christian authority. He did not ask how those who had renounced the world should be reintegrated, as a group, into the body of the faithful. Assuming that this had already happened, Gregory considered how best to integrate asceticism with the powers and responsibilities of the leaders of the community, whom he called simply the *rectores.*[25]

At a stroke Gregory resolved the institutional divisiveness of earlier debate. There was no longer any need to consider the

boundary between the cloister and the world, or to negotiate relations between the Desert and the City. In Gregory's eschatological landscape, it made little sense to cordon off separate spaces for different groups of believers. The one institution that mattered was the Church: it was the task of all those in authority to gather together as many believers as possible, in anticipation of the Last Days. Salvation now depended upon the skill and commitment of the *rectores*—in Gregory's terms, upon *peritia* and *caritas.* As Gregory defined it, *peritia* was ascetic virtuosity rendered socially prominent and socially useful. Deploying a rhetoric of expertise, he mounted a claim to power that deflected the accusation of ascetic elitism. He bonded *peritia* to *caritas* and in this way resolved the discussion of how individual perfection related to the perfection of the community.

These were not new terms, nor even newly paired. We might look immediately to Augustine as the principal influence on Gregory: from the *Confessions* and the *City of God* Gregory would have derived a whole vocabulary for describing and scrutinizing experience and charity.[26] Gregory's decision to discuss asceticism and authority in terms of these abstract qualities, rather than in institutional terms, was itself a familiar patristic, and more specifically an Augustinian, deliberative strategy. The fundamental premise of the *City of God,* as Augustine made clear before he began the work, was that the two cities would never be real entities until the end of time; in the present time, they were defined only by interior disposition, by the kind of love borne in the heart. There were two kinds of love: "of which the one is holy, the other impure; the one sociable, the other self-centered; the one concerned for the common good for the sake of heavenly society, the other subordinating the common good to self-interest for the sake of a proud lust for power."[27] Augustine, however, thought it was impossible definitively to tell which love prevailed in the heart of a given individual: he refused on principle any attempt to distinguish the citizens of the two cities.

In theory, Gregory remained faithful to the agnostic premises of Augustine's theology of society. In exegetical and pastoral practice, however, the need to tell the difference between particular souls impressed Gregory strongly, and the opportunity to do so captivated him. The discernment of temperaments was precisely the

attribute Gregory described for the ideal ruler and claimed for himself: this was the mark of *peritia*.[28]

Gregory learned *peritia* from his reading of Cassian. It is well known that Gregory's moral vocabulary as set out in the *Moralia* is drawn directly from the taxonomy of vice established in the *Institutes* and *Conferences;* less attention is paid to the importance for Gregory of the discourse of expertise subtending Cassian's exegesis of the vices.[29] The full extent to which this language of technique colored Gregory's thinking, and in particular his assimilation of Augustine, has been underestimated. Cassian articulated for Gregory, perhaps more clearly and more persuasively than any other authority—including Augustine—that the government of souls was the skill of skills.

Cassian, Experientia, *and Community*

In the late Roman world, *experientia* was the fruit not of "lived experience," but of training. For the elite or the ambitious, this meant in particular literary education. In his schooling as a young man, Gregory acquired *experientia* in the liberal arts through his memorization of canonical texts; this equipped him for a traditional career in public office.[30] To veer from this path toward asceticism was not to repudiate civic *experientia,* but to supplement one training with another. Monastic asceticism was a far less venerable discipline than the arts of grammar, logic, and rhetoric, but it had rapidly acquired its own traditions and procedures. The pioneers of the monastic movement in the Latin West were, for the most part, highly educated members of the elite, who had been careful to shape their practice in terms that their peers could recognize.

It was in this spirit that Cassian addressed a Gallic audience seeking his instruction in the monastic life as practiced by the desert fathers. Straightaway in the preface to his first work, the *Institutes,* (composed c. 419), he announced:

> As for the method of these matters [monastic asceticism], it cannot possibly be taught, understood, or memorized—neither by verbal instruction nor by reflection at leisure. Everything depends entirely upon training and practice [experientia usuque].

> Just as this way of life cannot be passed on except by someone who has himself been tried and tested, so it cannot even be learned or understood except by someone who has spent himself in an equal effort and application to grasp it. The disciple meets regularly with spiritual men to discuss and to brush up technique: a moment's inattention and everything fades again from the mind.[31]

As I have argued elsewhere, Cassian's presentation of himself as an expert on asceticism has to do with his extremely delicate position as a new arrival from the East in the western Mediterranean. His patrons in southern Gaul were ascetic zealots, eager to conscript Cassian's services in their strenuous bid to control episcopal office in the region. Aware that this enthusiastic political bidding was not to the ultimate advantage of the ascetic party if its members wanted to be convincing as civic leaders, Cassian sought to curb the intemperate opportunism of his ascetic readers. He accordingly assumed the impressive authority of expertise acquired in the East.[32]

Cassian's seeming stress on "lived experience" over "mere learning" in the preface to the *Institutes,* quoted above, must be gauged with reference to the precise meaning of the terms *peritia* and *experientia.* Properly understood, his message is that discourse and memory are the media through which ascetic expertise is transmitted: the distinction drawn is between a false and a true literacy. Cassian's emphasis on literacy implied a redefinition of the ascetic life, more suited to the urban environment of his sophisticated Western readers. The extreme physical discipline and spiritual encounters with angels or demons associated with the desert Fathers gave place in Cassian's texts to a program of reading: *lectio, meditatio,* and memorization of the Bible.[33]

Such a rewriting of the content of monastic life altered its institutional framework: if purity of prayer could be achieved through a controlled discipline of reading, ascetics did not have to forsake the City for a spectacular life of Desert asceticism. Cassian came to recommend the cenobitic life lived in community over the eremitic life lived alone. His real interest, however, was not in the debate over the respective merits of the solitary and the communal life, but in isolating the approach to Scripture that would bear most fruit. The *peritia disputandi,* "expertise in debate," was useless;

only a *peritia* grounded in the moral and spiritual commitments of the ascetic framework could produce true knowledge of Scripture.[34]

This is not to say that Cassian had no discourse of charity: *caritas* stood as the first and indispensable surety of holy expertise. In one conference, he warned against those who have received from God the skill to perform healings, but who use it in a spirit of pride and self-regard:

> We ought never to admire for their miracles those who affect them for show only: we should rather look to see if they have driven out all their sins, and have perfectly altered the pattern of their lives . . . For this is the practical knowledge that is given another name by the Apostle: charity. On his authority we prefer it to all the tongues of humans and of angels, to the fullness of faith that can move mountains, to all knowledge and prophecy, to the renunciation of property, and even to the glory of martyrdom.[35]

Cassian offered a ringing reprise of Paul's hymn of love in 1 Cor., drawing the conclusion for miraculous power in words that Gregory would later resume in his *Moralia.* "It is made quite clear that the height of perfection and blessedness does not consist in the performance of miracles, but in the purity of love."[36] A true ascetic *peritia* thus had to be premised on *caritas,* but the reverse was also true, as Cassian explained in the next conference, *De amicitia.* A true bond of friendship could exist only between those who were of equal moral stature: *caritas,* in this sense, depended upon *peritia.* Abiding by what he knew to be a traditional premise—fundamental in classical discussions of friendship since Aristotle—Cassian went on to draw the implications for ascetic charity.[37] He distinguished between two kinds of love: on the one hand, *agape,* which one might show to anyone, and on the other, *diathesis,* an intimate trust to be shared only with a moral equal.[38] A monastic community could not tolerate different levels of ascetic prowess among its members: between the spiritually weak and the strong no lasting concord of wills could be forged. This was not because of a lack of magnanimity on the part of the strong or their want of patience: at fault was rather the *pusillanimitas* of the weak. They did not have the patience to accept correction from their betters. Resentful and stubborn in their failings, they would always be restless, prone to anger and picking quarrels.[39] Cassian thus found himself arguing

for an unavoidable division of the community of believers: a majority of inexpert Christians and an inner circle of the truly experienced, truly charitable.

In turning to Cassian's reception and adaptation by Gregory more than 150 years later, we shall see that the bifurcation of charity is the one place in which Gregory on principle departed from the analysis of the *Institutes* and *Conferences.* In most other respects, Gregory followed and sought to increase the momentum of Cassian's discussion. A contrast is often drawn between Cassian, the writer for the monastic cloister, and Gregory, with his broader, "more humane" perspective.[40] Further work on Cassian, however, makes it clear that his identity as a "thorough-going cenobite" is, at least in part, a function of the uptake of his texts in the Rule of St. Benedict and in later Benedictine tradition. In the fifth and sixth centuries Cassian had many readers in the West, stationed at every level of the Church. Despite his promotion of cenobitism, Cassian's most important questions were not posed in institutional terms. Rather, he sought to define asceticism as a technique that could be learned and transmitted across a range of situations. In the *Institutes* and *Conferences,* then, Gregory found a language of expertise and, to a lesser extent, of charity that spoke to his needs as an ascetic in a position of public power and responsibility.[41]

Gregory the Great, Peritia, *and Authority*

In adapting Cassian's discussion to his own ends, Gregory removed altogether its institutional trappings: he made absolutely no reference to the question of the relative merits of the eremitic or cenobitic lives, choosing instead to describe in personalized terms the character of ascetic authority. The upshot of this was to resolve, or to bypass, Cassian's anxieties about true friendship between moral unequals. Gregory refused to contemplate the possibility that the spiritually weak would not accept correction from those strong in virtue. He had faith not only in the boundlessness of *caritas,* but also in *peritia* as an inexhaustible resource. If the strong were both fully committed and truly expert, even the most stubbornly pusillanimous would receive *admonitio* at their hands.[42] Gregory undertook to supply his hearers with the techniques of consummate pastoral expertise; in so doing he made the case for his own ability to command.

Gregory's reworking of the relationship between *caritas* and *peritia* is not argued through point by point. Instead, the claim to authority on the basis of expertise is worked into the texture of his language. In casting the *pastorale magisterium* as an *ars,* Gregory immediately aligned it with asceticism, which was also an art, *techne,* as Cassian had established. The results could therefore be enumerated. Those who should come to the *regimen animarum* were "exalted by great gifts for the training of others." They should be "spotless in their desire for purity, robust and vigorous in renunciation, bursting from their banquets of erudition, humble in long-suffering endurance, fortified by courage in the exercise of their authority, well disposed in the grace of mercy, strict and severe in their righteousness."[43] Gregory ushers his readers smoothly from *studium castitatis* to *longanimitas* and *severitas.* Ascetic accomplishments are assumed to be social property for immediate distribution; accordingly, the list of personal attributes fades into a list of skills for those in power.

Demonstration of expertise should not devolve into virtuoso display: in the *Pastoral Rule* ascetic technology is always already premised on *caritas.* Gregory saw the physical practice of asceticism as braided with the strands of charity. Christian rulers are clad in the ephod of the temple priests, a garment made of double-dyed scarlet and fine twined linen (Exod. 28.8). The scarlet stands for *caritas,* double-dyed to represent the dual precepts of charity, love of God and of neighbor. As for the twined linen, Gregory continues: "When the mind is being pulled taut at the bidding of charity, rest assured that the flesh must be softened in self-denial. So it is that the twined linen is woven in with the double-dyed scarlet. Shining white linen comes from the ground: the linen of the ephod can only signify the brilliant moral purity that gilds a pristine body."[44]

In the *Moralia* Gregory went out of his way to disabuse the gratuitous use of ascetic virtue: echoing Cassian directly, he argued that the moral sense of *virtus* was far more important than its manifestation as the power to do miracles. "The proof of holiness is not to make miracles, but to love others as oneself; moreover to believe truths about God, and to think better of one's neighbor than of oneself. For true power is in love, not in the showing of miracles . . . It is not miracles, but charity alone that indicates true

servants of God. Therefore the witness of heavenly discipleship is the gift of brotherly love."[45]

Peritia for Gregory thus functions as technical perfection in the dispensation of charity: in this way, charity knows no limits. The real experts, as defined by Gregory, reach all sorts and conditions of hearers with the appropriate exhortation. While for Cassian the logic of ascetic technology unavoidably sets constraints upon social relations, asceticism in Gregory's thinking is construed in such a way as to expand the range of possible interaction between the *periti* and the *simplices.*

For Gregory in the *Pastoral Rule,* and elsewhere, the figure of Paul most aptly expressed this operation of charity by an expert. "Through the bond of his charity" the apostle had commerce with the angels and with sinners alike. "He was swept up by the power of the spirit to contemplative heights and, without demurring, brought low by the duty of love for others."[46]

As Gregory moved into cataloguing types of *admonitiones* in book 3 of the *Pastoral Rule,* and indeed throughout his work, he took delight in recounting the exploits of Paul's correction of the various communities to whom he wrote. Paul is the *peritus medicus,* lulling the fractious Corinthians into a false sense of security with mild words of praise—and then wielding the knife of correction. "Like a skilled doctor, he saw the wound that needed to be cut, but he saw also a patient who was fearful; he delayed and delayed—and then suddenly he struck."[47] The expert then is in absolute authority, such that he can heal all inner wounds, resolve all communal differences through his *praedicatio.*

Gregory's apparently sure and calming touch with the social strain brought on by asceticism threatened in turn to induce its own tensions. If ascetic virtuosity could be disabused, and pastoral incompetence identified and avoided, there remained the danger of pretenders. Gregory's emphasis on the power of the expert made it all the more important to be able to distinguish true from false *peritia:* an arrogant imposter equipped with all the marks of expertise could pass himself off as a spiritual leader, with disastrous consequences for those exposed to his influence. *Imperiti* leading *imperiti:* Gregory's newly moralized, newly technical conception of authority opened up new and alarming scope for authoritarian deception. The logic of Gregorian analysis neutralized the aloof

posturing of haughty ascetics, while supplying them an opportunity to wreak vengeful havoc in the community.

Gregory established as the definitive mark of genuine expertise the ruler's willingness to accept correction himself.[48] Only a truly skillful and loving *rector* would respond to *admonitio* regarding his own conduct, while the purveyor of an empty *peritia* would be revealed as the hollow and conceited speaker that he was. Job and his friends provided a perfect illustration of these contrasting attitudes. As Gregory saw it, Job fundamentally accepted his suffering as testing *(experimenta)* from God. His friends, although they had some knowledge of spiritual matters, lacked true *peritia* as they attempted to offer Job their ready-made *admonitiones* for his unique ordeal.

Thus Eliphaz, though his teaching is sound, is inexpert enough to assume that he can tell Job something Job does not already know.[49] Similarly, Baldad blunders on in his diatribe, fearful lest a moment's pause be interpreted as hesitant *imperitia*—Gregory's implication being that a diffident silence would have been a far more convincing sign of expert concern for Job.[50] The clumsy arrogance of Sophar is still more ruthlessly exposed, as Gregory has him succumb instantly to the insensitivity he is loud to condemn. Sophar rebukes Job for his domineering outburst—"Shall men hold their peace to thee only?"—and then proceeds to betray his own presumption, in calling on God to show Job the secrets of divine wisdom, which he names the *multiplex lex.* Gregory rebukes Sophar's gauche naivete with Paul's definitive statement of the unfathomable depth of God, commenting: "Sophar, then, is both an expert through his application to knowledge and an ignoramus in the inflated effrontery of his words. He lacks solidity and wants to be a better man than he is."[51]

The advertisement of familiarity with divine secrets may be more than naive: Gregory is at times prepared to type Job's friends as heretics. It is not that they purvey false doctrine; rather, their error lies in their self-promotion at the expense of the community. "Heretics pretend that they have heard a hidden word." They shun commonly received wisdom, lest they be thought common equals. With their parade of occult knowledge, they seek adulation *apud imperitorum mentes.*[52]

Such self-styled experts would always refute their own pretensions to prominence, Gregory argued. Conceding that his empha-

sis on authority raised the stakes of competition for power, he nonetheless insisted that the marketplace of claims to expertise was self-regulating. Job's friends believe themselves to be *prae ceteris peritos,* but in the sight of God, their vainglorious *imperitia* is unerringly revealed.[53] They prefer to seem holy to those who do not know better, rather than working for the humility on which enduring sanctity is grounded. In playing to the gallery, such hypocrites become indistinguishable from those whom they desire to impress. Their lack of humility finally bespeaks their ignorance of charity: if unable to accept correction themselves, they will never be able to dispense it appropriately to others. Sophar "knew what he was saying, but not to whom he was saying it": like all Job's comforters, he was unable to grasp the nature of Job's predicament. As though to demonstrate this further, Gregory uses one of Sophar's shallow truisms—his invocation of the divine *multiplex lex*—to release a soaring aria on the multiplicity of charity, a Gregorian resetting of Paul's hymn of love to the Corinthians. Within the domain of his exegesis at least, Gregory could ensure that the banal claims of pretenders to *peritia* were always found wanting.[54]

Gregory wagered his own authority in the bid to clinch the distinction between genuine and fake expert. In devising the criteria by which to judge the ideal ruler, he invited assessment of his own performance as a spiritual leader in these same terms. From the outset of the *Pastoral Rule,* Gregory depicted himself as one of the *imperiti.* But rather than bemoaning at further length his unsuitability for office (as in the letters), he distinguished himself from other *imperiti* who did not know how to assess themselves. With such expert humility, he immediately assumed the authority to correct them in their claims to power.

Read in conjunction with the *Pastoral Rule,* the protestations of unworthiness in the letters—of how much the burden of office presses upon his heart—thus aim to record not only the purity of Gregory's intentions toward power but also his skill in measuring that weight and his apparent openness to being corrected. The letters in this sense are performative of the *Rule:* Gregory demonstrated to his audience the *peritia* and *caritas* he had taught them to look for in a *rector.* This strategy is overt in the synodal letter of February 591, addressed to the bishops of Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem. The letter reissues verbatim, with a

few cuts, the discussion of the opening sections of the *Pastoral Rule,* before closing with an affirmation of orthodoxy.[55] The main difference lies in the use of the first person. Every statement of the ruler's need for humility is directly followed by a personalized demonstration of humility, and the impersonal directives of the *Pastoral Rule* ("sit rector") now bear explicitly Gregory's claim to expertise: "Perpendo quippe quod omni cura vigilandum est ut rector sit."

As the synodal letter reveals with particular clarity, the messages transmitted in the *Register,* and above all Gregory's expressions of vulnerability in office, were meticulously derived from his other writings. What has been called Gregory's "personal style" as a correspondent was characterized by a formal expertise in rhetorical protocol no less precise than the control of administrative detail evidenced by the business letters of the papal chancery.[56] For example, the letters sent in October 590 and February 591 to Anastasius, the deposed patriarch of Antioch, whom Gregory had befriended at Constantinople, are virtually identical in their evocation of the raging seas of worldly affairs, which threaten to engulf the new pope.[57] The refrain of lamentation may be interpreted as a sincere token of Gregory's reluctance to power.[58] Equally, I suggest that the studious reiteration in the *Register* of themes composed first in the exegesis and the *Pastoral Rule* indexes Gregory's determination to hone a language of authority, a decision that in turn betrays the insecurity of his position.

Gregory and the Roman Clergy: The Limits of Consensus

The arbitration of patristic debates over asceticism, the studious elaboration of a public personal voice: these were not disinterested efforts on Gregory's part, nor were they automatically convincing. Such a mobilization of rhetorical energy would hardly have been necessary if his tenure of power had been uncontested. The insistent tone of the discourse on authority—and in particular the preoccupation with false leadership—speaks for the embattled situation in which Gregory placed himself in Rome in the 590s. For the most part, Gregory's writings do not openly betray their immediate political context; towards the end of the decade, however, in the preface to the *Commentary on 1 Kings [=1 Sam.],* Gregory went so far as to identify his enemies openly. He was under attack from

"clerics with limited horizons and this-worldly concerns." They did not see the value of Gregory's exegesis on obscure and difficult books of the Bible. As has been observed, the *Commentary* itself is noticeably sharp in its discussion of the proper response to obtuse behavior by those in authority.[59]

We are unused to thinking of Gregory as a dangerous figure, arousing rivalry and opposition. In his famous account of the election of 590, Gregory of Tours imagines the new bishop of Rome rallying the citizens to endure the plague, commanding unanimous support in their hour of suffering.[60] However unanimous his election by the people of Rome, Gregory's arrival in the Lateran palace was not a happy event for its usual occupants, the Roman clerical establishment, traditionally not well disposed toward asceticism. Gregory was the first professed monk to take papal office, and he brought with him into the palace a circle of ascetic friends and advisers, many of whom had been with him since the late 570s. If in any doubt as to his political vulnerability as a monk and an intellectual, he had only to consider the negative example of the ascetic Laurentius, unsuccessful claimant to the papal throne in the bitter schism of the early sixth century, or his own friend, Anastasius of Antioch, deposed in 570 for his less than total adherence to imperially pronounced orthodoxy.[61] Once elected, Gregory wasted no time: within eighteen months of his election, he had installed his monkish associates in place of the standing officers of Roman clerical government.[62]

As Peter Llewellyn has shown, the Roman clergy in the early Middle Ages functioned as a tight and jealous corporation.[63] They were perhaps prepared to countenance some disruption of normal procedure in response to the crisis of 590, but comprehensive seizure of the initiative by Gregory's monastic party was intolerable. Gregory's papacy initiated a period if not of open schism, then of running tension between the Roman clergy and Gregory's disciples as they vied for control of the Lateran. By 649, with the accession of Martin I, the clergy had won the day: the monastic party was safely reconsigned to liturgical duties at the major basilicas. The public platform constructed by Gregory for an expert ascetic conduct of power had been pulled down.[64]

In resisting ascetic invasion, the Roman clergy could count on the weight of institutional tradition behind them. In staging his

coup, Gregory therefore had to do more than simply replace or reshuffle clerical officers: institutional changes would never be enough to secure his position. Other resources of authority were required. In this context, Gregory's apparently academic sermons of exegesis may have taken on a politicized edge, as he strove to broaden his ascetic constituency, even wooing and winning over members of the clerical hierarchy. The homilies on difficult areas of Scripture seem to have been addressed to a fluid but select audience of monks, clerics, and laity.[65] Their sympathetic attention bespoke their commitment to Gregory's moral appropriation of papal authority. In the *Homilies on Ezekiel,* in particular, Gregory celebrated the special complicity he enjoyed with his "people."[66] "Worldly clerics," now placed under moral pressure, had good reason to denigrate these precious devotional gatherings. Their complaint about superfluous exegesis, reported and rebutted in the *Commentary on 1 Kings,* may have been aimed precisely at discrediting the Gregorian *populus* in Rome.

In this context also we may understand the Gregorian discourse of *peritia* and *caritas.* Lacking a conventional ecclesiastical power base, Gregory needed not only concrete support but also a language of legitimation. His tenure of office was not self-explanatory: he had to offer a rhetoric of public explanation, the terms of which would ideally command ready assent. For this task he was already well prepared in 590. The *Pastoral Rule,* in a sense his manifesto, was the fruit of more than ten years of reflection on leadership, asceticism, and community. Assessing the state of "the ascetic question" in patristic texts, he had taken its commonplace terms—*expertise, charity, humility*—and articulated a subtle and specific claim to pastoral command. Even those least inclined to favor Gregory's cause could not dispute the authority of the Fathers upon whom he drew,[67] and only the most observant could dismantle the synthesis he had so expertly crafted.

NOTES

My thanks to the Department of Theology and the Medieval Institute at the University of Notre Dame—and to John Cavadini in particular—for the invitation to participate in the symposium. I am grateful to the Society of Fellows in the Humanities, Columbia University, for

the period of scholarly *otium* during which this paper was completed. For the tempering of my own *imperitia,* I am beholden to the Columbia University Medieval Colloquium, Robert Markus, and especially Kate Cooper. Translations are my own unless otherwise indicated.

1. *RP* 1 (*PL* 77:14A); see epigraph.

2. E.g., *Mor., Epistola ad Leandrum* 1 (*CCSL* 143:1–2); *Ep.* 1.5–7 (*CCSL* 140:5–10); *Dial.* Prol.3–6 (*SC* 260:12–14).

3. R. Gillet, "Grégoire le Grand," in *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité,* 17 vols. (Paris: G. Beauchesne et ses fils, 1932–95), 6:872–910, sums up this tradition: "Sa vie fut une longue souffrance, celle du mystique parmi les agitations du monde et les obligations du gouvernement" (875–76). Cf. M. Frickel, *Deus totus ubique simul: Untersuchungen zur allgemeinen Gottgegenwart im Rahmen des Gotteslehre Gregors des Grossen,* Freiburger theologische Studien 69 (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1956).

4. Dagens, *Grégoire,* 140: "Grégoire, contemplatif, voué, malgré lui, à l'action pastorale"; 84: "Grégoire, au contraire, demeurera un homme divisé, douloureux, anxieux." Straw, *Gregory,* a modern classic, offers a new approach to the seemingly incompatible categories in Gregory's thought and language.

5. A secularizing tendency most pronounced in Richards, *Consul,* e.g., 1, 263–65. Dudden's classic *Gregory* devotes barely one-fifth of its thousand pages to monasticism and theology, on the premise that Gregory was above all "a man of action, a great practical genius" (2: 285–86). The biography planned by Robert Markus will definitively break this mold.

6. The *Moralia* were substantially finished by 590. After 590, in addition to the *Pastoral Rule,* the *Dialogues,* the *Register,* and the homilies on the Gospels, Ezekiel, 1 Kings, and the Song of Songs, one must reckon with the lost commentaries on the Pentateuch and the minor prophets, referred to in *Ep.* 12.6 (*CCSL* 140A:975). For a full discussion of chronology and composition, see P. Meyvaert, "The Date of Gregory the Great's Commentaries on the Canticle of Canticles and on I Kings," *Sacris Erudiri* 23 (1979): 191–216.

7. See R. Lizzi, *Il potere episcopale nell'Oriente Romano* (Rome: Edizioni dell'Ateneo, 1987); and for Gregory, C. Leyser, "'Let Me Speak, Let Me Speak': Vulnerability and Authority in Gregory the Great's *Homilies on Ezekiel,*" in *Gregorio magno e il suo tempo,* 2 vols. (Rome: Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum, 1991), 2:170–82.

8. See C. Leyser, *Gregory the Great and Early Western Monasticism, c. 400–604* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, forthcoming).

9. See Dagens, *Grégoire,* especially chap. 3, "Le langage grégorien de l'expérience," 83–129.

10. Ibid., 101: "Nous sommes ici au-delà de l'empirique . . . Cette connaissance vécue et éclairée par la foi constitue l'expérience spirituelle." Cf. the parallel formulation by A. Léonard, "Expérience spirituelle," in *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité,* 4:2004–26 at 2006. However, in rendering the Latin *experior* and *experimentum,* Dagens is notably precise. See below, note 41.

11. See, e.g., Dudden, *Gregory,* 295 ("the skill and judgement of a veteran politician"), also 320. Cf. Richards, *Consul,* 97 ("expert in dealing with refugee problems of all sorts"), also 99–100.

12. R. A. Markus, "The Sacred and the Secular: From Augustine to Gregory the Great," *JThS* n.s. 36 (1985): 84–96, at 91.

13. Markus, *End,* 199–211.

14. Ibid., 67–68.

15. Ibid., 157–99.

16. Ibid., 37–43.

17. Ibid., 75–83.

18. Ibid., 163–68.

19. Ibid., 181–92.

20. Ibid., 168–75, for Salvian; 189–91, for Pomerius; 202–8 for Caesarius.

21. Ibid., xi.

22. Ibid., 224.

23. *Dial.* 4.43.2 (*SC* 265:154).

24. See R. A. Markus, *Saeculum: History and Society in the Theology of St. Augustine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970; 2nd ed., 1989).

25. R. A. Markus emphasizes that by *rectores* Gregory had in mind all those in authority, whether ecclesiastical or civil. See R. A. Markus, "Gregory the Great's *Rector* and His Genesis," in Fontaine et al., *Grégoire,* 137–46.

26. See Dagens, *Grégoire,* 84–87. Also P. Catry, "L'amour du prochain chez Grégoire le Grand," *StudMon* 20 (1978): 287–344 at, e.g., 305n.91; and Straw, *Gregory,* 90–92.

27. Augustine, *De Genesi ad litteram* 11.15.20; cited by Markus, *Saeculum,* 60.

28. The Gregorian and more broadly patristic term for the ability to tell the difference between souls was *discretio.* See, e.g., *RP* 1.11 (*PL* 77:23–26) on the *nasus discretionis.* For discussion, see Dagens, *Grégoire,* 117–24; Straw, *Gregory,* 227–35. Gregory's description of the Rule of St. Benedict as *discretione praecipuam* (*Dial.* 2.36 [*SC* 260: 242.6–7]) has provoked its own literature; see, e.g., A. de Vogüé, "*Discretione praecipuam:* A quoi Grégoire pensait-il?" *Benedictina* 22

(1975): 325–27. The point here is that, in Gregory's analysis, *peritia* in the *regimen animarum* conferred this discernment.

29. For Cassian and Gregory's moral taxonomy, see R. Gillet, ed., *Grégoire le Grand: Morales sur Job, Livres I–II* (*SC* 32*bis* [Paris, 1975], 89–102). Dagens briefly notes Cassian's influence on Gregory's notion of "experience" (96). See P. Miquel, "Un homme d'expérience: Cassien," *CollCist* 30 (1968): 131–46; and P. Rousseau, "Cassian, Contemplation and the Cenobitic Life," *JEH* 26 (1975): 113–26. Both Miquel and Rousseau discuss experience, but less so expertise, in the *Institutes* and *Conferences.*

30. Note that by the sixth century, *experientia* was also formally used by papal notaries as an honorary title for bishops and administrators of ecclesiastical property. See *Liber Diurnus Romanorum pontificum,* ed. Th. Sickel (Vienna, 1889), 24–26. Thus, Gregory's *Register* contains more than a hundred instances of address to "Experientia tua"; see, e.g., *Epp.* 9.8 (*CCSL* 140A:569), 9.169 (*CCSL* 140A:727), 11.58 (*CCSL* 140A:964), 14.2 (*CCSL* 140A:1066). The conscription of *experientia* by the papal chancery for formal use may account for Gregory's use of cognates in his spiritual writings, such as *experimentum* and *peritia.* See below, note 41.

31. *Institutiones* Pref.4–5 (*SC* 109:26).

32. For this and some of what follows on Cassian, see C. Leyser, "*Lectio Divina, Oratio Pura:* Rhetoric and the Techniques of Asceticism in the *Conferences* of John Cassian," to appear in *Atti del convegno, Modelli di comportamento, modelli di santità: Contrasti, intersezioni, complementarità.*

33. See again Markus, *End,* 181–88.

34. *Collationes* 14.9, 16 (*SC* 54:192, 203–6).

35. Ibid., 15.1–2 (*SC* 54:211–12).

36. Ibid., 15.2 (*SC* 54:212).

37. See *Collationes* 16.3 (*SC* 54:224); cf. 16.24 (*SC* 54:243). On this axiom of classical friendship and its application in a separate but related ascetic context, see E. Clark, "Friendship between the Sexes: Classical Theory and Christian Practice," in Clark, *Jerome, Chrysostom and Friends* (Lewiston/Queenston: Edwin Mellen, 1979), 35–106.

38. *Collationes* 16.14 (*SC* 54:233–34).

39. Ibid., 16.23 (*SC* 54:242–43).

40. See, e.g., R. Gillet, "Spiritualité et place du moine dans l'Eglise selon Grégoire le Grand," in *Théologie de la vie monastique* (Paris, 1961), 328. For Cassian as cenobite, see Rousseau, "Cassian," 113.

41. Dagens, *Grégoire,* 98, suggests that Gregory preferred *experior* and *experimentum* to Cassian's *experientia;* as he accurately shows,

these words connoted testing, in particular the testing of faith by God. In focusing here on *peritia* as the Gregorian recasting of Cassian's *experientia,* my purpose is to supplement this area of Dagens's treatment. *Peritia* and its cognates appear in Gregory's writings almost as many times as the cognates of *experior/experimentum* (90–110), and I suggest that *peritia* for Gregory necessarily conditioned the understanding of *experimentum.* Thus, Job needed "expertise" to interpret what befell him as "divine testing."

42. See, e.g., *RP* 3.8 (*PL* 77:58–64): "Quomodo admonendi protervi et pusillanimes"; and below, note 47.

43. *RP* 1.5 (*PL* 77:18C).

44. *RP* 2.3 (*PL* 77:29B–30A).

45. *Mor.* 20.7.17 (*CCSL* 143A:1016.23–27, 31–34); translated in Straw, *Gregory,* 94.

46. *RP* 2.5 (*PL* 77:32D–33A).

47. *Hom.Ez.* 1.11.18 (*CCSL* 142:177.317–19). Cf. *Mor.* 24.16.41 (*CCSL* 143B:1219). Also *RP* 3.27 (*PL* 77:102C): "peritus medicinae coelestis Apostolus"; *Reg.* 5.51 (*CCSL* 142:450.1265–66): Paul as "peritus magister internae militiae."

48. An unpublished paper by K. Cooper, "Late Roman Advice on Late Roman Advisers," discusses the ancient context for this characteristic of the wise ruler, observed in kingship literature from the Hellenistic period onward.

49. "Quantalibet doctrina mens polleat, grauis eius imperitia est uelle docere meliorem." *Mor.* 6.39.64 (*CCSL* 143:333.1–3).

50. *Mor.* 8.36.59 (*CCSL* 143:428).

51. "Sophar itaque et per scientiae studium peritus et per audaciam tumidae locutionis ignarus, quia ipse grauitatem non habet, meliori optat quod habet." *Mor.* 10.6.7 (*CCSL* 143:538.36–39), commenting on Job 11.3–6.

52. *Mor.* 5.23.45 (*CCSL* 143:249.8).

53. *Mor.* 28.2.11 (*CCSL* 143B:1401–2), on Job's fourth comforter, Eliu.

54. *Mor.* 10.6.8–10 (*CCSL* 143:541–44).

55. *Ep.* 1.24 (*CCSL* 140:22–23). Cf. *RP* 1.10–2.7 (*PL* 77:23–42).

56. See D. Norberg, "Style personnel et style administratif dans le *Registrum epistularum* de Grégoire le Grand," in Fontaine et al., *Grégoire,* 489–97. Through analysis of clausulae endings, Norberg has been able to tell which letters were composed by papal notaries, usually according to established formulae, and which by Gregory himself.

57. *Ep.* 1.7, 25 (*CCSL* 140:9–10, 33–34). Cf. texts cited in note 2 above. Besides these tropes of discomfort, neither letter appears to contain much of substance: as with all correspondence in antiquity, spe-

cific information or demands (relating perhaps to Anastasius's rehabilitation at the imperial court) must have been carried by the bearer.

58. Cf. Dagens, *Grégoire,* 139.

59. *Reg.* Prol.5 (*CCSL* 144:52.138–40): "dum cordibus quorundam ecclesiasticorum uirorum uetus sollicitudo mundanae intentionis inmergitur." On bad superiors in the *Commentary* as a whole, see A. de Vogüé, "Les vues de Grégoire le Grand sur la vie religieuse dans son Commentaire des Rois," *StudMon* 20 (1978): 17–63.

60. Gregory of Tours, *Libri historiales* 10.1.

61. On Laurentius and the schism, see P. Llewellyn, "The Roman Clergy during the Laurentian Schism: A Preliminary Analysis," *Ancient Society* 8 (1979): 245–75. On Gregory's interest in the Laurentian party, see *Dial.* 4.42.1–4 (*SC* 265:150–52). On Anastasius, deposed in 570 and restored in 593 through Gregory's influence, see *Ep.* 1.24, 25, 27, and 5.42 (*CCSL* 140.22–34, 35, 325–27); Dudden, *Gregory* 1:155, 2:228–29.

62. See in particular the deposition of Roman archdeacon Laurentius and his replacement by Gregory's friend Honoratus in September 591: Appendix 3, *CCSL* 140A:1095. Cf. Dudden, *Gregory,* 1:245–46; Richards, *Consul,* 70–84.

63. See P. Llewellyn, *Rome in the Dark Ages* (London, 1970), chaps. 4–5.

64. P. Llewellyn, "The Roman Church in the Seventh Century: The Legacy of Gregory I," *JEH* 25 (1974): 363–80.

65. See Meyvaert, "The Date," 201–7, for a more extended discussion of the tantalizing evidence on Gregory's audience.

66. *Hom.Ez.* 1.Praef. (*CCSL* 142:3): the homilies (at least the twelve in book 1) are spoken *coram populo.* For Gregory's complicity with his audience, see *Hom.Ez.* 2.2.1 (*CCSL* 142:225); and Leyser, "Vulnerability," 180–82.

67. *Reg.* Prol.5 (*CCSL* 144:52): as Gregory reports it, the worldly clerics base their complaints about Gregory's superfluous exegesis on respect for authority of *doctorum venerabilium.*

4

JAMES J. O'DONNELL

The Holiness of Gregory

Who was Gregory the Great? And why "Great"? Few historical figures pass through the pages of modern scholarship and history carrying such unambiguous epithets. In Charlemagne's case, the epithet has become part of the name, and the Venerable Bede and Ivan the Terrible are exceptions that prove the rule. In the case of Gregory the nomenclature emphatically does not reflect a simple monovalent reading of his life and work, tranquilly uncontested.[1] At the same time, it is also remarkable that the modern attention devoted to his work has been by and large remarkably complacent and forgiving. This essay will examine the sources of our respect for Gregory, as far as possible on his own terms, in the hope of making a contribution to the circumspection and precision of our encounters with Gregory.

A rough typology would suggest that there are at least four Gregories in circulation. One is the master of an early medieval *Volkskatholizismus,* a teller of miracle stories. This Gregory wrote the *Dialogi,* had relics sent to pious friends, and embodied beliefs in the life unseen now and at the end of time that are for the most part rebarbative to our age.[2] It is this Gregory that a scholar, liberal, Romish, and of a certain age, rejected so instinctively and so vigorously that he laid up a mountain of misplaced, and thus undeservedly neglected, erudition to try to prove that the Gregory we admire could not have written those *Dialogi.*[3] Against that dismissal, we can read the preemptive defense of Gregorian authorship by a scholar employing the characteristically British argument that reference to the "culture" of late antiquity will suffice to explain differences and render the author accessible to us without diluting his remoteness.[4]

But few would disavow the second Gregory. This one is a master of the spiritual life, and if not profoundly original (though it is not quite clear why he would care to be profoundly original), yet possessed of deep insight into the workings of the human personality. He is near the head of the line of those who offer an anatomy of the soul open to diagnosis and cure by the Christian pastor. He emphatically differs from Augustine in precisely this, for all that every page of his writing respires Augustine when it does not echo Cassian. The two best and most important books about Gregory in recent times offer compelling and complementary views of this Gregory.[5] Even when, as usual, this Gregory invokes a view of the human personality that we cannot share, many of us read him the way we read Zen masters: not exactly convinced but almost wishing we could be, and quite sure that we could believe it if only we found ourselves in the right circumstances. This is the most alluring and thus at the same time the most perilous Gregory, who evokes from us the loyalty of disciples, or rather the special loyalty of disciples fainéants who have never actually had to endure the master's scrutiny!

A third Gregory, to continue this typology, is Gregory the Roman bureaucrat and administrator. Histories of the early papacy are pulled between two poles, Ullmann and anti-Ullmann, where the predominance of, respectively, the ideological and the pragmatic elements in papal activity and self-understanding offers the interpretive key. In Gregory's case, the pragmatic tends to prevail, if only because the hundreds of surviving letters in the *Register* allow us to trace the minutiae of the activity of the papal chancery by the month, and sometimes almost by the day. So the most recent biography,[6] to be sure a thinly veiled anti-Ullmann polemic in form, confines itself through 260 pages to a study of Gregory the administrator (not surprisingly, the Gregory who emerges is depicted throughout as the embodiment of *Christianitas* and *Romanitas*),[7] while the author of the *Moralia,* the *Dialogi,* and the other exegetical works is given short shrift in a chapter on his "legacy." The biography of Gregory in the present edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* shows a similar bent. There is a small ideological point made by such an approach, of course, in that Gregory the workaday administrator was occasionally cited as a model of a restrained type of papacy as recently as the 1960s, when

some seemed to recall seeing his works prominently displayed around the desk of Pope John XXIII.[8]

I will finally posit, for the purpose of argument, a fourth Gregory the Great whom I have seen only briefly, for the most fleeting of moments, but whose absence surprises me. Where is the debunked Gregory? Where is the Gregory whose alliance with imperial power, whose heavy disciplinary hand (as in the case of the church of Salona), and whose willingness to bend with the winds of political fortune have found their righteous foe? Where is the Gregory whose ascetical excesses—which destroyed his health, certainly limited his effectiveness as pope, and probably shortened his life—have been reduced to their psychogenetic explanation? Although I do not particularly want to believe such interpretations, it is striking nonetheless that they are so rare. Few bishops of Rome of such eminence, few such self-revealing proponents of Christian sexual asceticism, few such pragmatic administrators have escaped revisionism. With other figures, we come to expect that the debunked figure will take his place alongside the venerated one, and in the resulting stereoscopy we will descry a synthesis.[9] Gregory largely escapes. Jeffrey Richards is perhaps typical: although he cannot absolve Gregory of a certain bloodied pragmatism in his exultant response to the murder of Maurice and the exaltation of Phocas,[10] he passes the episode by in a single sentence. The field that might lie open here for a dauntless commentator is perhaps suggested by the striking epithet applied to Gregory by a sometime Regius Professor of Modern History, who instanced him in passing and without further explanation as "the Stalin of the early church."[11]

But wherein lies the "greatness"? It may not have escaped attention that every modern book on Gregory I have cited thus far includes the epithet in its title or subtitle.[12] This "greatness" to which we remain attached is partly just a rhetorical convenience: it distinguishes him from Gregories of Nyssa and Nazianzen and is thus a kind of fossil of something that once meant more than it does now. But I suggest—and this is the point of departure for my principal remarks—that we continue to accept this epithet because Gregory supplies for us the model of a kind of sainthood that we have not much thought about and would not, perhaps, always in cold prose retain, but that still speaks for us in our unexamined places. Our reverence for the master of the spiritual life, our

respect for his administrative skills, our willingness to make excuses for his credulity and his cooperation in cruelty, all are part of a process of interpretation that makes him something for us that he was not necessarily for himself.

In untangling this riddle of his identity, I will begin by assuming that the ill-formed, half-consciously–received category of "holiness" is indeed useful, if not for what it will tell us about Gregory, then for what it will tell us about our reading of Gregory. What sense does it make to speak of the holiness that Gregory believed in, the holiness that he exemplified?

It would be tempting simply to plug Gregory into one or another received modern discussion of holiness and holy men in late antiquity. It is a topic that comes and goes, and is found among students of both Christian and non-Christian antiquity. The notion owes much to twentieth-century cultural anthropology and comparative religion. In English, you cannot mention the topic without hearing echoes of Walter Otto's *Idea of the Holy*—which has a very different ring, for all that it is the same book, from the German title, *Das Heilige.* Ludwig Bieler's *Theios Aner,* published almost sixty years ago, is regularly cited, though one wonders how often it is attentively read: too convenient to be missed, it is also too dense to be influential. I cite both those classic studies here by way of saying that on approaching Gregory's holiness today, neither furnishes a sufficient support.

The great modern student of the holy man in late antiquity is, of course, Peter Brown. On recurring to Brown's oeuvre to pursue the image, what strikes the eye is diversity. His original study of the rise and function of the holy man in late antiquity is a deserved classic,[13] but it proves on examination to have had a particularity that partly explains its brilliance and partly lessens its utility as a model. The terrain on which Brown made that first exploration turns out to be not all of the late antique Mediterranean world, nor yet all of the late antique Greek world, but specifically the Syrian world, where the holy man could be depicted as mediator, lubricating the functioning of society for the perpetually struggling provincials. In later studies, Brown pursued "the holy" through other venues. Only in retrospect (as when it appears in his collected essays of the 1970s) is it clear how much his study of the iconoclastic controversy has to do with the way "holiness" in some

places and at some times inhered in holy pictures, and inhered in them in a way that excited stern resistance.[14] In a little book of lectures a few years later, another material manifestation preoccupied him: the relics of saints in the Latin West.[15] He ventured the general observation that in the places and times there treated (Gregory of Tours is a primary focus), holiness had moved from the land of the living to the land of the blessed dead, and the very bodies of the dead were the vehicles of that holiness.[16]

But Brown has never been a scholar to settle in one place for long. In a remarkable, and so far unanthologized, *retractatio,* he recurred to his original study a dozen years after it first appeared.[17] There Brown situated the original article in the intellectual and social trajectory of the time and place in which he had written it, and discovered that if he had it to do over again (a perilous thought experiment always), he would be more inclined to stress the function of the holy man as "exemplar" rather than "mediator." Since that time, Brown has published a large and in many ways quite conventional study of one aspect of the practices of holiness in late antiquity,[18] but in his freshest and most original work in years he has now taken quite a different tack: the bishops who appear in his *Power and Persuasion in Late Antiquity: Towards a Christian Empire*[19] are leaders well rooted in the traditional social matrices of the Roman empire.[20]

The models proposed do not exhaust the possibilities. I think it is fair to discern a certain unease on the part of Robert Markus in his *End of Ancient Christianity.* His contribution lies in accepting that the boundary between "sacred" and "secular" is anything but fixed, and often vigorously resistant to attempts to give it a particular location and value. He has chosen a chronological field of study over whose course it is possible—as he argues, to my taste cogently—to see the boundary itself disappearing.[21] He describes what he chronicles as "the absorption of the 'secular' in the 'sacred'," though it might be fair to wonder whether even there modern conceptions do not prevail. Is the "sacred" or the "secular" the zero-degree value? I think we assume that the "secular" plays that role, but it may be argued that for many societies the "secular" is the artificial construction separating itself from the normal experience of humankind, and the disappearance of that conception may be seen—as it almost certainly was seen in late antiq-

uity—as the reassertion of an essential unity to replace an artificially divided state of society. When Markus comes to review the contribution of Brown,[22] he cautiously and characteristically chooses to see the location of the holy not in individuals but in the community, and to see "holy men" as foci of what is widely present, not as alien intrusions into the secularity of their world.

I have reviewed these issues to induce greater caution in approaching Gregory's own case and to suggest that a different approach may usefully complement what has gone before. Although the historian may easily be preoccupied by the material realities of ancient holiness and its expression, he or she should never forget that what we know and think of such phenomena is entirely dependent on the texts in which we see them constructed for us. The process is not without its artifices. For example, late antique Christian monasticism was even in its origins heavily dependent on the manipulation of the movement's "image" through texts—a fact that, to my knowledge, has never received sufficient attention.

For monks would seem to be the group of people in the ancient world best placed to escape our knowledge altogether. To hear their ideological proclamations, they wanted nothing to do with the wicked wide world. They fled to the wastelands to lead lives remote and chaste, cut off from the world. But the world went with them in texts. The psalms they sang to themselves, to each other, or to God may have seemed to reflect a simplicity of long lost pastoral society, but they could not have memorized those words had the texts not been mediated through skilled translators in some of the greatest cultural centers of the ancient world. Christianity as a whole was a product of sophisticated textual manipulations, and established and maintained its identity as a single, in principle homogeneous, religious movement through the common scriptural texts, through common liturgies already reduced to textual form at a surprisingly early date, and through credal formulas worked out by the most textually knowledgeable of bishops at Church councils.

But more than that, monks (or at least the monks whose activities and thoughts characterized the movement to their contemporaries and to us) made precious sure that they would be present *to* the world through their texts. The first great monastic founder, Anthony, lived for late antiquity as he lives for us, through the pages of a text importantly ascribed (whether correctly or not is of

little consequence here) to Athanasius, the master of an urban, textual, imperial model of Christianity. The lives and thoughts of the desert Fathers pressed in on genial, latitudinarian urban Christians through texts of every kind. When in the fourth, fifth, and sixth centuries the "Library of the Fathers" began to take definite shape,[23] the private thoughts of monks who had cut themselves off from the world regularly found their way back to the wider world.

To try to trace all the textual influences of the monks of these centuries on even a single writer like Gregory is an impossibly complex task. For the moment, we can be satisfied with seeing some of the ways in which the "image" of the monks themselves was mediated and deployed. Gregory himself is heir to two important traditions at least. First, his *Dialogi* could not have taken the shape and form they did without the model of Sulpicius Severus's *Dialogi* and his life of Martin of Tours.[24] The *Tendenz* of the two works is strikingly similar: in a world in which the tales of monastic heroism from the East have spread far and wide, both make the vigorous claim that whatever excellences may be found elsewhere, a quite similar form of holiness is found here, in fourth-century Gaul or in sixth-century Italy, in the most unprepossessing places. Gregory indeed takes the argument one implicit step further: although Benedict dominates the second book of the *Dialogi,* what strikes the reader most is the diversity and humility of the "role models" presented, and even how remarkable things happen through the agency of unremarkable people. The holy man for Gregory may well be (this should be no surprise to readers of the *Moralia*) a man of limited strength and confined virtues. It is the power of God that works the wonder. The biblical models that run through Gregory's work implicitly shaping individual episodes have the same effect: what happened then happens again here and now, in Italy.[25]

Thus, some of the power of Gregory's texts comes precisely from his ability to universalize his own situation. Augustine and Jerome saw the world in terms of specific local needs and controversies, and much of what they wrote lost power over time as the relevance of the context faded. One cannot argue that the issues and needs of Rome of the 590s are somehow dramatically closer to us than those of two centuries earlier, but Gregory's way of writing finds in Job his own story, and implicitly that of his readers, in a way that dramatizes a vision of the human condition and its remedies that

loses little by the lapse of time. The difficulty we have in getting a sense of Gregory's audiences is the other side of this coin, for his works reach across their original audiences quickly, precisely so that they may speak to us so vividly.[26]

One way to approach and appreciate the mechanics of Gregory's style is to look again at the *Dialogi*. In surprising ways, the work bears comparison for structure and purpose with the most widely read Latin text of the sixth century, Boethius's *Consolation of Philosophy*. Consider the similarities: Both are dialogues, in which the author appears as the central character with a single interlocutor. Both texts begin with that author in a state of distress and move him toward reconciliation with his situation.

But the parallels make the contrasts instantly visible. For Boethius, the misery into which he has fallen is utterly wrong for him, a fully merited punishment for errors of thought and understanding. Philosophical debate will liberate him from that darkness. The dialogue moves him from inarticulate self-pity to articulate and rational full partnership in the dialogue with a figure who embodies the full perfection of wisdom and self-control.[27]

Gregory, on the other hand, appears in a setting in which the misery he suffers has a healthy and redeeming name: "compunction." Where Boethius had fallen from worldly success to a state of isolation and confinement, Gregory has moved from a chosen state of confined isolation in the monastery to an unwelcome brand of worldly success. Although both men have lost their bearings, at least somewhat, the conditions are entirely different.

The prescriptions are different as well. Philosophy detaches Boethius from his own life and his own worldly situation by contemplation of general truths. The consolation he obtains liberates him from the here and now (the prison cell from which he will be shortly taken out to death) into a serene Platonic world of ideas. Ostrogothic Italy appears in the *Consolation* only in the self-pitying accounts of Boethius's career. It is the world of old philosophers and venerable myths in which Boethius (author of and character in the dialogue) finds rest. Gregory's source of authority, Scripture, offers a range of models scarcely less remote in time and place than did Boethius's. But Gregory uses them to bring himself and his interlocutor, the deacon Peter, back to the here and now, back to the real, Lombard- and plague-ridden Italy of his own time. He sees

in its midst the presence of the same holiness and the same promise of well-being that the biblical texts hold out. Job on his dungheap and Gregory in his vividly realized Italy are as close to Gregory's God as any neo-Platonic visionary could ever hope to be to the One.

One other difference between the two proves to be of central importance. For the reader of the *Consolation*, the figure of Boethius, moving from silence to speech, from self-pity to reason and self-control, is the focus of attention. The willing reader who uses this text as it was meant to be used will presumably emulate that "Boethius." The figure who emerges implicitly, the "consoled" reader, is very much an ancient student of philosophy and rhetoric, restored to the active life by study.

In the *Dialogi*, on the other hand, the central figure is undoubtedly Gregory, but the interlocutor is of scarcely less importance. Peter the Deacon brings to the table concerns and questions that the reader reasonably shares, and between his figure and that of the character portrayed as Gregory, we are led to see models of contemplation rather than action, or rather of active figures still rooted in contemplation. The twin movements of the reader in the *Dialogi* are from self-depreciating concern with other places and other times to the here and now, and from excessive concern with acting in the world to acceptance and recognition of the action of God in the world.

What is valorized in the end in the *Dialogi* is now no longer the holiness of the saints depicted: Benedict aside, they are not a memorable collection of individuals for the most part, and the best of them are every bit as humble as they should be. Nor is it the holiness of the characters in the dialogue: it is not their holiness that is at question, but rather their discovery that they have a place in a world that is quite adequately holy already, if they will but accept it. The issue is rather the holiness—and here the word is not quite the right one—of the readers of the *Dialogi*. In emulating Gregory and Peter, they do not become saints or warrior heroes of the soul, but they do acquire the "discernment" (that monastic *discretio* that so dominates Gregory's catalogues of the virtues)[28] to remain undistracted by the world and its temptations and to emerge from that world relatively unscathed.

Properly read, then, Gregory's work valorizes not Gregory's holiness but that of his reader. It speaks against the tendency to situate

the charisma in other times, in other places, or in special people. If to us, reading the *Dialogi* at a distance, it seems otherwise, that is our loss, but it is not something the first readers of the text would have felt. It is curious to see a text turning into the opposite of what it set out to be by the mere fact of surviving and being read with enthusiasm, but I think there are other examples one could cite.

One other aspect of this dialectic of holiness deserves to be called to attention. It is a holiness that the Christian reader of Gregory's text learns to acquire *through a text.* Augustine had to go hear Ambrose preach in order to receive his message: no private gnosis in a select reading circle for him.[29] But now, Gregory the bishop is careful to depict himself precisely as a private teacher and to present himself in a text that underscores that privacy. Even if read aloud in church (though there is no evidence that such a thing was thought of for this text), the *Dialogi* compel the reader to leave the four walls, the altar, and the liturgy, at least in imagination; to encounter the bishop, pope, and minister of the Eucharist in a very different setting; and then to acquire what he has to teach through the special kind of skill that goes with reading a written text. Here again we see the impact of the "Library of the Fathers" on the way Christianity could be lived.

In substance, Gregory's rejection of heroic models and heroic times for Christian holiness is no surprise, though we may have to be forced to listen to what he has to say. The *Dialogi* themselves deny "miracle" a central place very early on: *Dial.* 1.1.6, "mens autem quae divino spiritu impletur habet evidentissime signa sua, virtutes scilicet et humilitatem." We might pass over that easily, if we did not have the more substantial discussion of miracle at *Mor.* 6.15.18, in which the power of God in creation is emphasized as more remarkable than any of the feats of wonder workers. Most strikingly, even overt miracles can happen invisibly in a way that defeats the ability of those who benefit from them to know where the power comes from: *Hom. Ev.* 2.37, "hinc ergo, fratres carissimi, hinc certa consideratione colligite, oblata a nobis hostia sacra quantum in nobis soluere ualeat ligaturam cordis, si oblata ab altero potuit in altero soluere uincula corporis." In short, the most "popular" of Gregory's works, the *Dialogi* and the homilies on the gospels, leave the reader in a world—that is to say, a text—where holiness is breaking through everywhere, uncontrollably. To see

and experience it requires no heroic virtue, no special grace offered only to the few: surrender to an all-embracing grace, the grace of contemplation, will suffice.[30]

There is another kind of holiness in the here and now that is implicit throughout Gregory's works, and explicit surprisingly more often than we are wont to remember. I mean the holiness that is physically present through the Eucharist.[31] Although eucharistic liturgy was increasingly dependent on texts in Gregory's age,[32] it was still then (and in many ways is still now) a venue for holiness that resisted reduction to text and narrative. The correlation of the stories of the *Dialogi* with the liturgical life of the Church is, however, clear and consistent, and it reinforces the quiet insistence that I am imputing to Gregory on the accessibility and the ubiquity of the holiness that he knows.

But no reader of Gregory will fail to sense that what he is at most pains to write about is a holiness that is not merely present in church, or flooding the countryside around him, but found deep inside the individual. "Interiority" is a persistent theme of every modern study of Gregory's thought, and rightly so. The inner person, the self inside a besieged citadel of the mind, is the true center of the spiritual combat for Gregory.[33] How far to link this emergence of the interiorization of Christianity with the textual asceticism necessary to read and digest that "Library of the Fathers" is a large question I cannot undertake to answer here, but the fact requires us to add an element to the dimensions of Gregory's placements of the charismatic. Holiness is everywhere, holiness is at the altar, and holiness is deep inside the individual.

The question that demands to be answered next is whether Gregory achieved an integrated and integrating religious praxis for living in the midst of these possibilities. If he is a teacher, does he transmit his lesson successfully to disciples? Whatever *he* manages to see and live, can others share it?

If we turn to Gregory's biography for an answer to that question, I think it is clear that he would have thought he had found such a praxis in monasticism. The interplay of inner and outer experience for the contemplative monastic existence is a subject on which few writers are as eloquent as he. The permeability of the personality by the words of the sacred text, especially through the ceaseless psalmody of the community, certainly offered one such praxis.

Gregory's surviving works are all unstinting in praise of such a life, especially when he feels himself shut off from it by the burdens of his office. His own choice to espouse that life, and his later choice to try to impose that life on the clergy of Rome, are unequivocal votes for the style. It was not *yet* an idea whose time had come, as the ferocious resistance to Gregory's personal style among the traditional city clergy of Rome shows, but his earthly afterlife gave the idea classical expression: for better or worse, it is a dominant theme of later Latin centuries.

It is in this light that we should view his shortest book, the *Regula pastoralis.* There, if anywhere, he reduces his praxis to words that others can not only apply to themselves but also pass on again to others. And that is probably the best test of a teaching: not whether it can be inculcated in disciples, but whether they can inculcate it in turn in others. If the *Regula pastoralis* is a success, then Gregory is a success. Certainly his intention is to say things of central importance: *Regula pastoralis* 1.1, "ars est artium regimen animarum." If indeed the prescriptions that follow in the four short books achieve the delineation of that praxis, then a great thing has been accomplished.

But a textual history needs to be kept in mind, for those words are familiar ones. We find a minor character in Macrobius's *Saturnalia* 7.15.14 stating, "philosophiam artem esse artium et disciplinam disciplinarum," but he is echoing authoritative words of Praetextatus ("disciplina disciplinarum" at *Sat.* 1.24.21), and the phrase recurs in Cassiodorus's digest written in Gregory's lifetime: Cassiodorus, *Institutiones* 2.3.5, "aliter, philosophia est ars artium et disciplina disciplinarum." So far, so good for Gregory: if indeed philosophy was as much a praxis as a theory for hellenistic antiquity,[34] then Gregory's unacknowledged echo here lays claim to very high ground for the pastoral art.

But we must not assume that such a claim is valid merely because it is stated. The slippery slope on which Gregory stood is illuminated when we consider that a very similar expression occurs in the fourteenth century, in the alien but congruent pages of Nicephorus the Solitary, collected in the *Philokalia,* who says roughly, "Monastic life is called the art of arts and the science of sciences." But monastic life, whatever Gregory's optimism for it, and whatever success it had in the eastern Church, never became

quite the unifying and integral praxis of Christianity for the Latin Church.

Ultimately, for the Latin West, both in the Latin medieval avatar and the Reformation and post-Christian modernity that followed, it is the textual praxis that prevails. The triumph of one form of textual praxis gives the later Middle Ages their characteristic association with "scholasticism," but we find no less in Protestantism the same assumption of salvation through a text. "Sola scriptura" and all its most antischolastic variants down to contemporary American fundamentalisms are preeminently praxeis dependent on a text; the express casting aside or subordination of the liturgical ritual in radical Protestantism is a profoundly "medieval" gesture for just that reason. If Gregory and the Latin Church of those late antique centuries had a success in creating and propagating a praxis, it was here above all.

Was that enough? Is the holiness of Gregory what he sought to make it? Is that even a fair question? For in pressing the question, we canonize Gregory anew and reveal much about our own need to see in him an authority. What he seeks not to be and urges his followers not to be, that we have unconsciously become. And as we pass, perhaps, with whatever reluctance, into the grim dawn of postmodernism, it is noteworthy that we hear now sudden surprised observations that our scholarly and intellectual practices are still pervaded by an ethic that owes much to the askeses of late antiquity, howbeit confined to the disciplines of the text.[35] The construction of our views of "Christianity," "religion," and "the holy" that lie behind our scholarly investigations turns out, in just that proto-postmodern moment, to be the most interesting thing of all. The message of our time may be that as we have labored in the modern age of textually ascetic philological scholarship to find out the truth about other times and other cultures, only to be chagrined to see how much of ourselves we project onto those other ages (which we notice mainly by noticing how much our predecessors have projected themselves), we need to find out the truth about ourselves. I began this essay by asking, Who was Gregory? I end it by suggesting that we cannot answer that question unless we first ask, Who are we?

NOTES

To put this essay in final form evoked with clarity and warmth the memorable weekend of the symposium at which it was first presented. It is daunting to realize that I have admired the learning and the wisdom, and known firsthand the generosity, of Robert Markus for more than half my life now, and it is a pleasure to try to give formulation to a few thoughts about Gregory in a setting that honors him. My one qualm is that the atmosphere of that symposium was so rich, so collegial, and so shot through with insights offered from all directions that I have more than once had the feeling, in putting down a particularly well-formed idea (as it seemed to me) in these pages, that I was actually taking the liberty of writing down something someone else had said that weekend. The printed record of the other talks may very well offer the evidence necessary to convict me of something between plagiarism and discipleship!

1. I do not see that there is a study of when, where, and why Gregory became "Great"; Robert Markus (personal communication) speculates that the eleventh century might be a good place to look, at a time when the epithet might have been a way of distinguishing him from a more ambitious pope of the same name (for similar rhetorical use of Gregory, see note 8 below).

2. There is by now a ritual obligation to quote Harnack's famous summary evaluation somewhere in a volume devoted to Gregory: A. Harnack, *History of Dogma,* 7 vols. bound as 4 (New York: Dover, 1961; originally published c. 1900), 5:262: "The doctrine of grace taught by Pope Gregory the Great . . . shows how little Augustinianism was understood in Rome, and how confused theological thought had become in the course of the sixth century. A more motley farrago of Augustinian formulas and crude work-religion (ergismus) could hardly be conceived. Gregory has nowhere uttered an original thought; he has rather at all points preserved, while emasculating, the traditional system of doctrine, reduced the spiritual to the level of a coarsely material intelligence, changed dogmatic, so far as it suited, into technical directions for the clergy, and associated it with popular religion of the second rank. All his institutions were wise and well considered, and yet they sprang from an almost naif monastic soul, which laboured with faithful anxiety at the education of uncivilised peoples, and the training of his clergy, ever adopting what was calculated by turns to disquiet and soothe, and thus to rule the lay world with the mechanism of religion . . . he sanctioned as religion an external legality, as suited to train young nations, as it was adapted to the

Epigones of ancient civilisation, who had lost fineness of feeling and thought, were sunk in superstition and magic, and did homage to the stupid ideals of asceticism. Gregory created the vulgar type of medieval Catholicism by the way he accented the various traditional doctrines and Church usages, and the tone to which he tuned Christian souls is the key we hear echoed by Catholicism down to the present day." Harnack's footnotes to that passage have important concessions: that "after reading Gregory's abundant correspondence, we gain a high respect for the wisdom, charity, tolerance, and energy of the pope"; and that "side by side with this external legality there are not wanting traits of Gospel liberty; see the letters to Augustine."

3. Francis Clark, *The Pseudo-Gregorian Dialogues* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1987).

4. Joan M. Petersen, *The Dialogues of Gregory the Great in Their Late Antique Cultural Background* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1984). The logic of the argument is identical to that of Averil Cameron, *Procopius and the Sixth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985). I do not mean to minimize the value of such "contextualizations" *(ut nostrates aiunt),* only to observe the consistency of a style of argument and to recall that even when a "culture" is generously limned, we have only succeeded in explaining the individual by appeal to a large number of similar individuals; the fundamental alterity of the other culture remains untouched.

5. Dagens, *Grégoire;* Straw, *Gregory.*

6. Richards, *Consul.* When Walter Ullmann came to write a study of a single pope's career, by contrast, it was the more ideological Gelasius; see Ullmann, *Gelasius I (492–493)* (Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1981).

7. *Christianitas* is a word Gregory uses sparingly and not specially in the author's sense, while *Romanitas* is a word he and the other Latin Fathers never use.

8. Hans Kung, *The Church* (New York: Image Books, 1967), 598–600. On the roots, surprisingly deep, of this rhetorical use of Gregory against the self-understanding of the modern papacy, see Dagens, *Grégoire,* 15, citing P. Meyvaert, "Gregory the Great and the Theme of Authority," *Spode House Review* (1966): 3–12 (reprinted, with page numbering retained, in Meyvaert, *Benedict*). Calvin called Gregory "the last bishop of Rome," and others later used him in advancing Lutheran and Gallican claims against Rome.

9. Augustine and Luther, and lately Paul, among Christian opinion shapers, have been especially well served in this vein, but perhaps most interesting for present purposes is the recent history of Thomas More. He was canonized in 1935, and an Academy Award–winning

film made him a secular saint a generation ago, but since then the tide has rather turned: Jasper Ridley, *Statesman and Saint* (London: Viking, 1983), made Wolsey the pragmatist and More the fanatic. A similar reservation, with great circumspection and some evident regret, runs through Richard Marius, *Thomas More : A Biography* (New York: Knopf, 1984); Marius had begun his career working on the "More Project" at Yale with all the enthusiasm imaginable, but had gradually grown estranged from the man he saw as persecuting innocent believers. The dialogue continues, with Louis Martz returning to the defense in *Thomas More: The Search for the Inner Man* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990).

10. *Ep.* 13.32–39; see Richards, *Consul,* 227: "under those circumstances, the papal glee can only be described as unworthy and misplaced, a very definite blot on his record."

11. H. R. Trevor-Roper, *Historical Essays* (London, 1957; American editions published under the title *Men and Events: Historical Essays*), 15: "Nobody can like the Church in those days. It was intolerant and obscurantist, and did not improve with time. St. Augustine read the classics—like Marx, the Founding Father was himself a humanist: the old bigot could weep over Dido, and puritanism struggled in his soul with light. His contemporary St. Jerome with difficulty overcame his taste for Cicero. But he overcame it in the end, and once the insidious spirit of humanity had been beaten down, no quarter was shown: it was crushed. St. Augustine organised the rabble in Africa, reducing doctrine to rhythmical slogans wherewith to drown the voice of opposition. St. Cyril organised a blackshirt claque to applaud his oratory in Alexandria. St. Gregory, the Stalin of the early Church, banned all profane learning as offensive and abominable. Truly they were no saints, those terrible old ideologues, past whose history Mr. Dawson [C. Dawson, *Religion and the Rise of Western Culture*] so discreetly slides; and what was the solemn liturgy which he so extols but a narcotic formulary?" This savory morsel is perhaps better appreciated if we note that it was reprinted by Trevor-Roper from its first appearance as an essay on Dawson's book in the *New Statesman* of the early 1950s. To be sure, the proximate source of this identification could as easily have been the remarks of the Jesuit Naphta in Mann's *Der Zauberberg* (8th ed. [Berlin: S. Fischer, 1955], 369) in the chapter "Vom Gottestaat und von übler Erlösung": "Das Proletariat hat das Werk Gregors aufgenommen, sein Gotteseifer ist in ihm, und so wenig wie er wird es seine Hand zurückhalten dürfen vom Blute."

12. I will quibble that Clark's book on the *Dialogi* is not about Gregory but about someone else and so escapes the epithet in its title, but

the first reference to the man in the printed text uses the full style "Pope St Gregory the Great," and so often after.

13. Peter Brown, "The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity," *Journal of Roman Studies* 61 (1971): 80–101; reprinted in Brown, *Society and the Holy in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), 103–52.

14. Peter Brown, "A Dark Age Crisis: Aspects of the Iconoclastic Controversy," *English Historical Review* 88 (1973): 1–34; reprinted in Brown, *Society and the Holy*, 251–301.

15. Peter Brown, *The Cult of the Saints* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981).

16. "And what the dead had no speech for, when living, / They can tell you, being dead: the communication / Of the dead is tongued with fire beyond the language of the living" (T. S. Eliot, "Little Gidding").

17. Students of late antiquity come to this article with some difficulty, though it appeared in what was then a radical and novel venue of what has since become almost an orthodoxy and certainly a respectable tradition, the "New Historicism" associated with the Berkeley of Brown's years there: Peter Brown, "The Saint as Exemplar in Late Antiquity," *Representations* 1 (1983): 1–25.

18. Peter Brown, *The Body and Society: Men, Women and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988). I reviewed this book in *Envoi* 2 (1990): 43–47.

19. Peter Brown, *Power and Persuasion in Late Antiquity: Towards a Christian Empire* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1992).

20. G. Fowden, "The Pagan Holy Man in Late Antique Society," *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 102 (1982): 33–59, clearly means to invoke Brown's model as a way of addressing specifics of non-Christian thought and practice, but for all its erudition and interest the article must be judged a failure on its main points. There is no attempt to give location and extent to the category of the "holy" other than to assume that the words ἱερός and θεῖος map well with the English (thus, originally Christian and then post-Christian anthropological) conceptions. If entirely true, this would be important, but it seems unlikely. Further, Fowden does not adequately confront the place of cult in "pagan" holy behavior. He prefers, like many others before him, to think of the excellence of his holy men as inhering in their intellectual lives, not in their vulgar liturgical acts. There at least the student of the pagan holy man has something in common with the student of the Christian one! Brown's judicious criticism of the two-level view of higher and lower religious experience in *The Cult of the Saints* is apposite here.

21. Markus, *End,* 1–17.
22. Ibid., 25–26 (a short excursus).
23. This is a theme to which I hope to return at some point. For the moment it suffices to say that it is a great change between the fourth and sixth centuries that when an Augustine writes of the principles of scriptural interpretation in *De doctrina christiana,* he does not have a standing collection of the Fathers to whom to have recourse for guidance, but that when Cassiodorus returns to the same task in his *Institutiones,* he does so with all the anxious bibliographical care of a Ph.D. candidate. I would submit that Christianity is a significantly different thing when the bishop and teacher is reading somebody else's commentaries on Scripture, or perhaps cribbing somebody else's sermons, than it was when the orthodoxy and salvation of the community depended on the bishop's own charismatic authority. The boom in Christian literature in the fifth and sixth centuries, matched by a boom in Christian efforts to manage that boom (think of Dionysius collecting canons, Eugippius extracting Augustine, or "pseudo-Gelasius" indexing the books one should and should not read), is one further measure of the "end of ancient Christianity" in those decades. Isidore of Seville is a little later, but his repeated recurrence to the topos of the impossibility of reading a prolific author is in one way a statement of the triumph of the written word. On Gregory, from his *De viris illustribus* 40.56: "Felix tamen et nimium felix qui omnia studiorum eius potuit cognoscere."
24. Cf. A. de Vogüé in his preface to the *SC* edition, *SC* 251:113–16.
25. "There are other places / Which also are the world's end, some at the sea jaws, / Or over a dark lake, in a desert or a city— / But this is the nearest, in place and time, / Now and in England" (Eliot, "Little Gidding").
26. I think it fair to say that most modern readers of these authors think they know a lot about the audience for Augustine's sermons and are less sure what to say about Gregory's audience; that is probably a delusion, but it reflects something about the styles of the two. With Augustine we are able to link audience and context, while Gregory's skill at uncoupling audience from context, and thus at creating a text that still seems capable of speaking long afterward, makes it harder to be smugly complacent that we know who his hearers were and what they thought. The only sustained work on the important question of Gregory's audiences is the unpublished dissertation of Judith McClure, "Gregory the Great: Exegesis and Audience" (Ph.D. diss., Oxford University, 1979). Her general argument, that only *Homiliae in Evangelia* looked to a "lay" audience, is probably correct,

but even that audience eludes our grasp. Her observation (174) that the bishops of Rome were not in the habit of popular preaching in the fifth and sixth centuries is quite just, but it is balanced by her well-placed regret (157) for the loss of the traditions that did exist in that age of ambitious and successful sermon giving among Latin bishops. The whole field of homiletics and audience in the Latin Church still needs further study; see the excellent article by R. Emmet McLaughlin, "The Word Eclipsed? Preaching in the Early Middle Ages," *Traditio* 46 (1991): 77–122. We have been preoccupied by delineating the teachings of the great men of the age, but those teachings only had value in their reception by an audience, one that is less readily comprehended and pigeonholed.

27. I have suggested such a reading in my commentary on the *Consolation:* Boethius, *Consolatio philosophiae* (Bryn Mawr: Thomas Library, Bryn Mawr College, 1984), passim.

28. For the virtue's place in the monastic literature, see Cassian, *Collationes* 2, passim, but nothing prepares the reader for its role in Gregory: see especially Dagens, *Grégoire,* 117–24.

29. See discussion of the famous passage of Ambrose's "silent reading" at *Confessiones* 6.3.3 in my commentary (Oxford: Clarendon, 1992). It is remarkable that just what Augustine says was not for him at Milan was what we assume others enjoyed in the "circle of Milan" and through Ambrose's published books. At the moment of conversion, and then at the moment of reducing that conversion to narrative, it was not in Augustine's interest to call attention to that aspect of his new religion. In this way as in many others, Augustine is himself a creature of a Christianity more archaic than the one he lived to dominate.

30. The vexed question of Gregorian and patristic miracles remains open and troubling. I am tempted to suggest that interpretation along the line of P. Veyne, *Did the Greeks Believe in Their Myths?* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), could help us past the question. If we assume that narratives are a transparent screen through which to see past events, or if we believe that they should be and, with a little help from a critical reader, can become so, then it becomes an urgent question which historical accounts to believe and which not. But if, on the other hand, we can recover a state of mind in which all texts speak equally of an artistically shaped and fundamentally unreal, but true, world, then the anomalies of miracle are far less troubling.

31. In Straw, *Gregory,* there are a half-dozen references to the Eucharist that can be traced through the index; there is only one extended discussion in Dagens, *Grégoire,* 336–38. I would not have seen the evidence so clearly without an interesting seminar paper by

my student, Jane-Marie Pinzino, who illuminated for me the pervasiveness and the seriousness of the eucharistic undertone in the *Dialogi.*

32. Gregory of Tours, *Historia francorum* 2.22, tells a (perhaps anachronistic, but if so more telling of the sixth than the fifth century) story of Sidonius Apollinaris using a "libellus" (missalette) for the bishop's prayers at Mass; these booklets would form the basis for the sacramentaries whose traditional names (Gregorian, Leonine, Gelasian) evoke the fifth and sixth centuries.

33. *Mor.* 35.20.49 (*CCSL* 143B:1810.78–79): "Expleto itaque hoc opere, ad me mihi uideo esse redeundum." In principle, words themselves are the enemies of the thought control that Gregory seeks. In that very confessional conclusion to the *Moralia,* after loosing half a million words on a single book of Scripture, he sounds as though in writing he has been at risk, much as Thomas à Kempis will later find himself at risk from going abroad in public: "Multum quippe mens nostra etiam cum recte loqui conatur, extra semetipsam spargitur. Integritatem namque animi, dum cogitantur uerba qualiter proferantur, quia eum trahunt intrinsecus, minuunt. Igitur a publico locutionis redeundum est ad curiam cordis, ut quasi in quodam concilio consultationis ad meipsum discernendum conuocem cogitationes mentis, quatenus ibi uideam ne aut incaute mala, aut bona non bene dixerim." (Compare, from hundreds of pages earlier, *Mor.* 10.2.2 [*CCSL* 143: 535.13–16]: "Nec fallacem quidem Sophar sententiam protulit, quod vir verbosus iustificari nequaquam possit quia dum quisque per verba diffluit, perdita gravitate silentii, mentis custodiam amittit").

34. See particularly P. Hadot, *Exercices spirituels et philosophie antique* (Paris: Etudes augustiniennes, 1981), with Hadot's concluding comments on the way the early articles collected there had brought him together with Michel Foucault at the time the latter was moving toward his own *Souci de soi* (vol. 3 of *Histoire de la sexualité* [Paris: Gallimard, 1984]); see also I. Hadot, *Arts libéraux et philosophie dans la pensée antique* (Paris: Etudes augustiniennes, 1984).

35. I think particularly of G. G. Harpham, *The Ascetic Imperative in Culture and Criticism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), but there is also food for similar reflection in David F. Noble, *A World without Women: The Christian Clerical Culture of Western Science* (New York: Knopf, 1992).

5

RODRIGUE BÉLANGER

La dialectique Parole-Chair dans la christologie de Grégoire le Grand

Pas plus que son maître Augustin, Grégoire le Grand ne s'est préoccupé de laisser à la postérité un traité spécifique ou quelque peu structuré qui concentrerait ses convictions de foi et un enseignement global concernant le Christ. Et pourtant, par-delà le débat toujours actuel sur les conditions d'une théologie systématique chez Grégoire[1] et dans le respect de la méthode exégétique qui est la sienne, on ne peut hésiter à reconnaître que sa pensée est porteuse d'éléments riches et originaux sur la personne et l'oeuvre du Christ.

En réalité, sa christologie habite tantôt son discours sur Dieu, tantôt son discours sur l'homme, dans l'espace d'une médiation large et active qui incorpore la vie ecclésiale, morale et spirituelle. Il suffira de rappeler à ce sujet que le titre christologique que Grégoire privilégie en l'empruntant à Paul est celui de "médiateur entre Dieu et les hommes,"[2] titre éclairé et enrichi au gré de ses considérations d'une multitude d'accents et d'applications proprement théologiques.

Le renouveau actuel des études grégoriennes nous permet d'espérer à bon escient la publication d'un ouvrage majeur sur la christologie de Grégoire. À ce jour, on peut certes trouver un utile profit dans les considérations de F. H. Dudden[3] et de L. Bauer,[4] mais leurs vues s'écartent avec peu d'aisance du trop célèbre verdict de disgrâce qui a stigmatisé la pensée dogmatique du brave pape jusqu'à un passé récent.[5] C. Straw a développé une réflexion christologique

substantielle et clairement articulée dans son ouvrage qui honore si bien la doctrine grégorienne. Dans deux chapitres très attentifs à la pensée de Grégoire, le Christ est présenté au point vital de la rencontre entre l'humain et le divin, comme celui qui résout tous les paradoxes de la condition humaine déchue et qui dans son Incarnation-sacrifice—notion-clé de tout l'argument—réconcilie l'irréconciliable. Écoutons plutôt le sens de cette réflexion dans un passage tout à fait significatif:

> Christ restores the cosmos by mediating its disparate halves. Every level of creation, from the most secret recesses of the human heart to the furthest extremities of the physical world, is touched and healed. Christ reconciles the irreconcilable: spirit and flesh, high and low, heaven and earth, God and man. As Mediator, he is both Teacher and Redeemer, Priest and Victim; each pair represents a carnal and spiritual polarity. Christ is a midpoint gathering and reconciling every contrariety . . . The contrarieties of mortal and immortal, righteousness and unrighteousness, highness and lowness are canceled out in Christ, who makes remedies of opposites. Christ creates a new equilibrium that restores man to his rightful position and returns him to his true spiritual identity.[6]

Cet extrait de l'ouvrage de Straw nous situe au coeur même de la christologie grégorienne et pose en droite ligne les jalons qui guideront notre réflexion. D'abord, nous ferons un bref retour sur l'anthropologie de Grégoire pour montrer qu'elle porte les fondements de sa christologie et en annonce la cohérence interne. Après, nous verrons comment pour Grégoire, le processus de l'incarnation assume la détresse de la parole et de la chair humaines déchues pour lui donner remède dans l'événement de la Parole incarnée, sacrifiée et glorifiée dans le Christ.

On ne peut aborder l'anthropologie grégorienne sans recourir spontanément aux notions antithétiques d'intériorité et d'extériorité. Si l'on admet que ces deux concepts inspirent largement la doctrine augustinienne, on reconnaîtra sans hésiter qu'ils s'affirment chez Grégoire au point de structurer de fond en comble toute l'architecture théologique qu'il nous propose.[7] Cela nous apparaît particulièrement évident dans les éléments de christologie que nous voulons éclairer ici.

Grégoire fonde toujours ses vues anthropologiques en nous ramenant aux conditions initiales de l'être humain.[8] Au moment de sa création, celui-ci avait été établi dans l'intériorité même de Dieu: il s'y retrouvait comme en sa véritable patrie,[9] partageant l'agréable société des anges,[10] voué tout entier à "contempler le Créateur, à rechercher sans cesse son visage et à se reposer dans la merveille de son amour."[11] Ailleurs, c'est en faisant appel à la métaphore du sein maternel que Grégoire illustre la condition originelle de l'homme à l'intérieur du monde divin: "Ce que le sein maternel représente pour tout homme, voilà quelle était pour l'ensemble du genre humain cette incomparable demeure du paradis."[12] Intimité totale avec Dieu, quiétude de l'âme, repos dans la contemplation: telles étaient donc les conditions d'intériorité parfaite offertes à l'homme au moment de sa création.

Un jour, pourtant, le serpent a ouvert la porte de cette enceinte sacrée et ses propos perfides ont entraîné l'homme à l'extérieur.[13] Pour avoir prêté l'oreille au discours du séducteur, l'homme a encouru l'exclusion de sa demeure originelle qui s'identifiait à Dieu lui-même,[14] il a été du coup *a paradisi gaudiis expulsus,* selon la formule qui inaugure toujours chez Grégoire une réflexion sur la situation de l'homme après la chute.[15]

Exclu par sa faute du monde intérieur de Dieu, l'homme déchu n'a même pas su se maintenir dans son propre monde intérieur: "il a été chassé de la demeure de son coeur," "il a perdu le site de son âme" pour "se répandre à l'extérieur"[16] et se retrouver finalement "plus bas que lui-même" et toujours plus "loin de lui-même."[17]

La première conséquence de la chute se présente donc pour Grégoire comme un déséquilibre profond qui arrache l'homme à l'intériorité divine et à sa propre intériorité pour le précipiter dans la plus complète extériorité. Dans cette condition, la vie présente est devenue pour l'homme un lieu d'exil *(exsilium, peregrinatio)*[18] et d'aliénation. L'âme elle-même, vouée à la servitude du monde sensible, s'est à ce point abîmée dans le charnel qu'elle s'en trouve métamorphosée, comme Grégoire n'hésite pas à l'affirmer: "Car l'homme qui serait devenu spirituel jusque dans sa chair [carne spiritalis] s'il avait consenti à garder le précepte divin est devenu par le péché charnel jusque dans son âme [mente carnalis] si bien qu'il ne peut appréhender que les réalités qu'il amène à l'esprit par l'intermédiaire d'images corporelles."[19]

Soumis à l'empire des réalités extérieures et charnelles, l'homme se voit finalement atteint jusque dans son processus de connaissance. En l'exposant à toutes les embûches de la pensée par images,[20] sa faute l'a en effet condamné à une véritable cécité spirituelle,[21] aggravée d'une surdité congénitale à l'égard du discours divin. Son langage, emprunté aux symboles de la réalité sensible, ne lui renvoie que l'écho de son propre vide intérieur et le laisse insensible aux accents du langage divin.[22]

Il nous faut ici abréger à la limite pour respecter le cadre restreint de cette étude. Disons donc que malgré l'étendue de son mal, l'homme déchu n'est pas définitivement abandonné dans un exil sans espoir, il n'est pas repoussé dans des ténèbres sans lueur. En dépit de sa misère, il peut encore échapper à la séduction du monde extérieur et plus, cheminant en ce monde même, il peut s'y frayer des voies qui le ramèneront à ses propres assises intérieures et de là jusqu'à l'intériorité de Dieu.

C'est dans cette perspective que s'ouvre l'autre volet de l'anthropologie grégorienne qui trouvera son éclairage définitif dans la christologie qu'elle induit progressivement. Rappelons que dans l'ensemble de son oeuvre, Grégoire propose trois voies à l'homme pour réintégrer le monde divin. Celle qu'il considère comme la voie première, quoique abrupte et précaire, part de l'observation attentive et admirative des oeuvres du Créateur.[23] Il privilégie comme autre voie la valeur pédagogique des *signa* et des *exempla,* entendons les faits miraculeux et les exemples des saints qui viennent provoquer la conversion.[24] La troisième voie qui retient plus directement l'intérêt de Grégoire dans son *Commentaire sur le Cantique des cantiques,*[25] c'est la voie royale qu'offre la Parole de Dieu reçue dans la foi, saisie dans l'intelligence spirituelle, et finalement incarnée dans le Christ-Époux.

Il est important de noter déjà que dans la pensée de Grégoire, chacune de ces voies suppose une démarche qui va du visible à l'invisible, de l'extérieur à l'intérieur, du connu à l'inconnu. L'homme a abandonné les réalités invisibles à cause des réalités visibles: il convient donc que ce soit ces même réalités visibles, *perversa* dans leur extériorité mais *conversa* dans l'intériorité de la foi et dans la chair du Christ, qui le ramènent aux réalités invisibles et à Dieu.[26]

C. Dagens a suffisamment éclairé la réflexion de Grégoire sur la possibilité du retour de l'homme à Dieu par la voie de l'analogie et

par la voie des *signa* et des *exempla*.[27] Notre réflexion mettra donc davantage en lumière les bienfaits de la troisième voie ouverte à l'homme dans l'intelligence de la Parole de Dieu d'abord proférée dans le langage humain, proposée ensuite en son ultime expression dans la chair et dans la vie du Christ. C'est précisément à ce point que se noue la dialectique Parole-Chair dans la christologie de Grégoire.

Pour rejoindre l'homme égaré aux confins de l'extériorité et renouer le dialogue avec lui, Dieu prend l'initiative toute gratuite de convenir aux servitudes de la condition humaine. D'un monde devenu par le péché opaque et clos sur son propre langage, Dieu entreprend de faire surgir sa Parole pour manifester progressivement son visage et éclairer l'homme sur le chemin de son exil: selon des expressions propres à Grégoire, il consent à "s'abaisser en parole,"[28] à "s'abaisser jusqu'au langage de notre faiblesse"[29] pour "parler à l'homme comme l'homme a l'habitude de parler à l'homme,"[30] pour s'adresser aux fils d'Adam à la façon d'un père à ses tout-petits.[31] Dans sa souveraine prévenance, Dieu met à profit tous les atouts de son "admirable pédagogie," cette *mira magisterii ars*[32] qui l'entraîne dans les artifices du langage humain et dans toute la gamme des sentiments qui inspirent ce langage.[33]

Cette pédagogie de la Parole de Dieu est particulièrement bien exposée par Grégoire dans son *Commentaire sur le Cantique des cantiques*. Voilà justement le livre biblique qui illustre jusqu'à sa limite la miséricordieuse condescendance de Dieu: avec une audace imprévisible, il se manifeste sur le terrain même de la réalité charnelle et, selon l'expression de Grégoire, il "va jusqu'à employer le langage de notre amour grossier" afin qu' "à partir du langage de cet amour-là nous apprenions avec quelle force nous devons brûler de l'amour divin."[34] Reste à l'homme la tâche ardue et délicate de saisir le discours divin dans les catégories humaines qui l'enveloppent, de passer de ce langage extérieur et charnel au message intérieur et spirituel que Dieu lui adresse.[35] Il lui faudra rectifier et approfondir sa lecture pour aller résolument de "la lettre à l'esprit," de l'allégorie toute familière à son sens spirituel ou, selon les termes même de Grégoire, de "l'apparence extérieure des mots à l'intelligence intérieure."[36]

Mais voilà qu'après avoir laissé "sa trace dans les merveilles de la création visible,"[37] après avoir renoué le dialogue avec l'huma-

nité "en s'abaissant jusqu'au langage de notre faiblesse,"[38] après avoir fait retentir sa Parole dans les enseignements de la loi et par la bouche des prophètes,[39] Dieu "a voulu prêcher sa propre sagesse vêtue de la chair . . . en sorte que nous puissions reconnaître dans son incarnation cette sagesse que nous ne pouvions saisir dans sa divinité."[40] Grégoire emploie ici le terme *praedicare* tout a fait judicieusement: Dieu a prêché progressivement sa Parole à l'homme dans le langage humain, il en a amplifié les effets et le sens jusque dans le langage charnel, il la livre maintenant dans une chair humaine qui deviendra désormais le lieu personnel et singulier de manifestation et de prédication de cette même Parole à la race humaine. Ce mode ultime de communication surpasse à l'infini toutes les initiatives antérieures de Dieu: "la condescendance de sa prédication a réalisé en nos coeurs ce que l'enseignement de la Loi n'a pu réaliser. Car la prédication de l'Incarnation nous a nourris plus abondamment que l'enseignement de la Loi."[41]

Dans cette perspective radicalement nouvelle, Grégoire nous convainc qu'adhérer au sens profond de l'incarnation, c'est passer à l'ordre définitif du dialogue de l'homme avec Dieu, c'est rencontrer la chair médiatrice dans son lien personnel et vivant à la Parole, c'est s'ouvrir sans réserve à l'*incarnata Veritas,*[42] c'est reconnaître enfin parmi nous l'"*homo perfectus* . . . qui demeura sans changement ni transformation dans sa condition propre [impassibilis atque incommutabilis permansit in propriis] afin de nous transformer à partir de notre propre condition [ut nos commutaret a nostris]."[43]

Straw a bien noté le souci qu'a Grégoire de toujours développer sa pensée christologique dans les plus strictes limites de l'orthodoxie, et cela jusqu'à une certaine servilité à l'égard des formules de Léon le Grand.[44] Quand on prend en compte l'accent prononcé dont Grégoire marque le réalisme de la chair du Christ à travers les notions de visibilité et d'extériorité, quand on constate aussi la reconnaissance qu'il professe de la chair révélatrice dans son lien à la Parole et de la chair rédemptrice dans son lien au sacrifice,[45] on croit même entendre en écho lointain l'aphorisme d'Irénée "salus autem, quoniam caro"[46] tout autant que la formule burinée de Tertullien "caro cardo est salutis."[47] Au point où il assume cette tradition, Grégoire fait valoir avec les accents qui lui sont propres que la chair tout autant que la Parole attestent le don de la vie et le don du salut.

On conviendra aussi que sous ce jour, la chair du Christ devient en quelque sorte la métaphore vivante de la Parole divine, plus encore chair et Parole fusionnent en un seul et même langage adressé à l'homme, et dans cette *incarnata Veritas* se trouve réduit à rien l'écart débilitant qui s'était creusé entre l'intériorité et l'extériorité. Commentant un texte des *Homélies sur Ezéchiel*[48] où le Christ est présenté comme le mur extérieur qui protège l'édifice spirituel de l'Église, Dagens montre bien comment la notion d'extériorité elle-même se trouve paradoxalement réhabilitée dans la christologie de Grégoire: "Ce qu'il faut retenir de cette curieuse métaphore, c'est l'emploi qu'y fait Grégoire des notions d'intériorité et d'extériorité, qui lui servent à exprimer dans des catégories qui lui sont familières, le dogme et la réalité de l'Incarnation. L'Incarnation représente pour Dieu une sorte de passage du dedans au dehors; Dieu est l'intériorité pure; en se faisant homme, il s'extériorise pour nous sauver et devenir le rempart de son Église. *L'extériorité de Dieu est donc un concept pleinement positif.*"[49]

Grégoire enrichit encore cette idée dans le passage où il commente le verset du Cantique des cantiques: "Ton nom est un parfum d'onction répandu" (Cant. 1.2):

> Le parfum d'onction répandu, c'est la divinité incarnée. En effet, si un parfum se trouve dans un flacon, il dégage moins d'odeur à l'extérieur; mais s'il se répand, l'odeur du parfum répandu se propage. Le nom de Dieu est donc un parfum d'onction répandu: parce que, de l'immensité de sa divinité, il s'est épanché à l'extérieur jusqu'à notre nature, et d'invisible qu'il est, il s'est rendu visible. En effet, s'il ne se répandait pas, nous n'aurions aucun moyen de le connaître. Il s'est répandu comme un parfum d'onction quand, tout en subsistant comme Dieu, il s'est manifesté comme homme.[50]

Il est donc bien vrai que dans l'incarnation, Dieu "s'est épanché à l'extérieur jusqu'à notre nature," il s'est soumis sans réserve aux conditions défavorables de l'extériorité humaine pour se rendre visible et se manifester pleinement à l'homme. En faisant ensuite appel au texte de Paul en Phil. 2.6–7, Grégoire affirme que cette effusion de Dieu au-dehors évoque en réalité le thème de la kénose du Verbe. Ainsi, l'abaissement pédagogique de Dieu dans sa Parole écrite s'achève par son abaissement kénotique dans la chair du Christ,

Parole incarnée. Après avoir abaissé miséricordieusement sa Parole jusqu'aux familiarités du langage humain,[51] Dieu livre maintenant cette Parole dans la faiblesse d'une chair humaine, "dans la prédication toute humble de son Incarnation."[52] La réflexion de Grégoire sur l'image du parfum répandu met donc en relief deux dimensions fondamentales du mystère de l'Incarnation: le parfum répandu, c'est avant tout la nature invisible de Dieu manifestée dans l'extériorité du monde visible par l'incarnation du Verbe; c'est ensuite le Christ dépouillé de ses prérogatives divines et abaissé jusque dans la faiblesse d'une chair humaine, pour rendre possible et fructueuse la rencontre entre le divin et l'humain en faisant renaître dans cette chair même la Parole eschatologique du salut.[53]

Cet abaissement de Dieu dans les limites de la chair humaine et du monde est comparé ailleurs par Grégoire à une descente dans la mer dont la trajectoire finale s'achèvera dans les abîmes de l'enfer.[54] C'est dans cette ultime démarche du Christ que seront ouvertes "les portes de la mort," que "la prison se transformera en chemin de passage," que les élus retrouveront enfin leur liberté pour rentrer définitivement dans l'intériorité des biens célestes.[55]

Dans ce long processus de dialogue et de rencontre entre l'homme et Dieu, le mouvement s'opère d'abord de l'intérieur à l'extérieur, de l'invisible au visible, du spirituel au charnel, du divin à l'humain; ce mouvement, néanmoins, évolue et s'achève dans l'Incarnation en rendant possible la libre volte-face du retour vers Dieu. Si Dieu, en effet, vient à l'extérieur pour "prêcher sa propre sagesse dans la chair,"[56] pour donner à l'homme "la connaissance de sa divinité,"[57] on aura compris sans peine avec Grégoire qu'il vient avant tout pour ramener l'homme aux conditions premières de l'intériorité et le réintégrer ainsi dans le monde divin: "Mais celui que l'homme avait abandonné au-dedans de lui-même est apparu au-dehors comme Dieu dans la chair assumée; et, en se manifestant extérieurement, il a rappelé aux réalités intérieures l'homme rejeté hors d'elles, pour qu'il prenne désormais conscience de ses malheurs, pour qu'il gémisse désormais sur les inconvénients de sa cécité."[58] "Le vin en effet, c'est la science de Dieu que nous avons reçue tandis que nous sommes en cette vie. Quant aux seins de l'Époux, nous ne les embrassons qu'au moment où, dans la patrie éternelle, nous le contemplons en embrassant sa présence."[59]

Au terme de cette réflexion trop brève, il nous semble maintenant possible de comprendre à la suite de Grégoire comment cette manifestation extérieure de Dieu, initiée d'abord dans sa Parole proclamée et accomplie ensuite dans sa Parole incarnée, annonce et opère le retour de l'homme vers sa "patrie" de l'intériorité divine. La chair du Christ comme caution ultime de la Parole devient le lieu emblématique et instrumental où s'expriment en même temps l'intériorité de Dieu et l'extériorité du monde dans une sorte de genèse et de fécondation réciproques. Ce que le Christ dit dans sa richesse intérieure et infinie parle dans sa chair extérieure et finie pour éclater par-delà la mort dans la Parole définitive de la résurrection. C'est dans cet événement pascal que la chair est amenée aux confins du sens, qu'elle devient langage et Parole cosmique de Dieu.

L'homme déchu qui se tourne vers cette Parole "médiatrice entre Dieu et les hommes" entend et voit en même temps l'appel de Dieu vers les chemins du retour à l'intériorité divine. La réponse appropriée à un tel appel sera essentiellement l'imitation du Christ et la marche à sa suite. Grégoire présente cette démarche à travers sa doctrine morale et spirituelle qui propose à la fois un mouvement horizontal de l'extérieur vers l'intérieur et un mouvement vertical du bas vers le haut. C'est le début de la conversion et de l'élévation de l'homme qui ne sont en définitive que la contrepartie de l'incarnation et de l'abaissement de Dieu, comme le suggère Grégoire: "La descente de la vérité a produit l'élévation de notre humble condition."[60]

NOTES

1. Dans un éventail très large de titres, retenons sur ce débat les études très pertinentes présentées au Colloque de Chantilly: J. Laporte, "Une théologie systématique chez Grégoire?" dans Fontaine et al., *Grégoire,* 235–43; M. Doucet, "Ontologie et économie dans la théologie de Grégoire le Grand: L'épisode du buisson ardent (Exod. 3.1–14)," ibid., 227–34; H. Savon, "L'Antéchrist dans l'oeuvre de Grégoire le Grand," ibid., 389–405.

2. 1 Tim. 2.5. Nous tenons à rappeler à la suite de P. Catry que le titre christologique *Mediator Dei et hominum* intervient au-delà d'une cinquantaine de fois dans l'oeuvre de Grégoire. Voir P. Catry, "L'amour du prochain chez saint Grégoire le Grand," *StudMon* 20 (1978): 299n.62.

3. Dudden, *Gregory,* 2:324–47.

4. L. Bauer, *De Christo vivificatore sancti Gregorii Magni doctrina* (Mundelein, Ill., 1938).

5. Le dossier du *Vulgärkatholizismus* ouvert par Harnack, qui trouve un écho même chez un historien aussi bien "disposé" à l'égard de Grégoire que P. Battifol, est judicieusement évoqué après tant d'autres auteurs par Savon, "L'Antéchrist," 389–90.

6. Straw, *Gregory,* 150–51.

7. À la suite de P. Aubin, "Intériorité et extériorité dans les *Moralia in Job* de saint Grégoire le Grand," *RechSR* 62 (1974): 117–66, C. Dagens a fait valoir jusqu'à l'évidence cette donnée fondamentale de la doctrine grégorienne (Dagens, *Grégoire,* 133–204, et passim). Enfin, les études suivantes de R. Bélanger ont confirmé sans réserve les mêmes conclusions: *Grégoire le Grand: Commentaire sur le Cantique des cantiques, SC* 314 (Paris, 1984), 50–62; "Anthropologie et Parole de Dieu dans le commentaire de Grégoire le Grand sur le Cantique des cantiques," dans Fontaine et al., *Grégoire,* 245–54.

8. À quelques détails près, nous reprenons pour cette brève section les réflexions de l'étude citée ci-dessus dans Fontaine et al., *Grégoire,* principalement aux 245–48.

9. *Mor.* 12.6.9 (*CCSL* 143A:633–634); *Dial.* 4.1.1 (*SC* 265:19).

10. *Mor.* 18.41.66 (*CCSL* 143A:930–31), 4.29.55 (*CCSL* 143:199–200).

11. *Mor.* 8.19.34 (*CCSL* 143:406.27–30): "Ad contemplandum quippe Creatorem homo conditus fuerat ut eius semper speciem quaereret, atque in sollemnitate illius amoris habitaret." Cf. *Mor.* 8.10.19 (*CCSL* 143:395–96).

12. *Mor.* 4.12.22 (*CCSL* 143:178.2–4): "Quod unicuique homini uenter est matris, hoc uniuerso humano generi exstitit habitatio illa summa paradisi."

13. *Mor.* 4.12.22 (*CCSL* 143:178–79).

14. *Mor.* 8.19.35 (*CCSL* 143:406).

15. *Cant.* 1 (*SC* 314:69); *Mor.* 5.61 (*CCSL* 143:261), 8.30.49 (*CCSL* 143: 420–21); *Hom.Ev.* 2.1 (*PL* 76:1082C).

16. *Mor.* 8.18.34 (*CCSL* 143:406).

17. *Mor.* 8.10.19 (*CCSL* 143:395).

18. L'exclusion de la "patrie" aboutit naturellement à cette situation. Cf. *Cant.* 1 (*SC* 314:69); *Mor.* 7.2.2 (*CCSL* 143:335), 8.13.28 (*CCSL* 143.401).

19. *Mor.* 5.34.61 (*CCSL* 143:261.10–13): "Homo enim, qui si praeceptum seruare uoluisset, etiam carne spiritalis futurus erat, peccando factus est etiam mente carnalis ut sola cogitet quae ad animum per imagines corporum trahit." R. Gillet a fait remarquer avant nous le

rapprochement avec Origène: "carne incrassantur quasi animam aut mentem tunc non habeant, sed toti carnes sint" (Origen, *De oratione* 29 [*PG* 11:542C]).

20. *Mor.* 5.34.61 (*CCSL* 143:261).

21. En effet, l'homme privé des biens du paradis "a perdu les yeux de son âme" (*Mor.* 9.13.20 [*CCSL* 143:470.3]), il est "pour ainsi dire aveugle de naissance" (*Mor.* 8.30.49 [*CCSL* 143:421.22–23]), son âme "ne peut connaître autre chose que ce qu'elle connaît en touchant, pour ainsi dire, avec ses yeux corporels" (*Mor.* 5.34.61 [*CCSL* 143:261.9–10]).

22. Cf. *Cant.* 1 (*SC* 314:69).

23. Le texte le plus explicite en ce sens est *Mor.* 26.12.17 (*CCSL* 143B:1277–78). Ailleurs, Grégoire se montre bien conscient des limites de cette "voie de l'analogie" pour parvenir à une juste connaissance de Dieu: *Mor.* 5.34.62 (*CCSL* 143:262), 5.34.61 (*CCSL* 143:261).

24. C. Dagens a clairement montré l'importance de cette "voie" dans la doctrine grégorienne. Voir Dagens, *Grégoire,* 225–33, 275–310.

25. Bélanger, trad., *Commentaire sur le Cantique des cantiques.*

26. Cf. *Mor.* 26.12.18–19 (*CCSL* 143B:1278–79); *Cant.* 12–21 (*SC* 314: 89–103).

27. Dagens, *Grégoire,* 205–310.

28. *Cant.* 3 (*SC* 314:71).

29. *Mor.* 20.32.63 (*CCSL* 143A:1049).

30. *Reg.* 2.68 (*CCSL* 144:157).

31. Cf. *Mor.* 32.5.7 (*CCSL* 143B:1631–33).

32. *Mor.* 33.7.14 (*CCSL* 143B:1684).

33. Cf. *Mor.* 20.32.63 (*CCSL* 143A:1048–50), 33.7.14 (*CCSL* 143B: 1684–85), 20.1.1 (*CCSL* 143A:1003).

34. *Cant.* 3 (*SC* 314:71).

35. *Cant.* 2–4 (*SC* 314:69–77).

36. *Cant.* 2 (*SC* 314:71): telle est la règle d'or de l'exégèse de Grégoire dans son *Commentaire sur le Cantique des cantiques.* Cette compréhension spirituelle du langage biblique trouvera ses multiples applications dans la vie morale et mystique.

37. *Mor.* 26.12.17 (*CCSL* 143B:1278).

38. *Mor.* 20.32.63 (*CCSL* 143A:1049).

39. *Cant.* 12 (*SC* 314:89).

40. *Cant.* 13 (*SC* 314:90.11–14): "Sed ueniens dominus, quia sapientiam suam per carnem uoluit praedicare . . . quam enim in diuinitate sua capere minime poteramus, in incarnatione eius agnosceremus."

41. *Cant.* 13 (*SC* 314:90.15–18): "praedicationis eius condescensio hoc egit in cordibus nostris, quod doctrina legis agere minime ualuit. Plus enim nos nutriuit incarnationis praedicatio quam legis doctrina."

42. *Mor.* 13.10.13 (*CCSL* 143A:676).

43. *Hom.Ez.* 1.7.10 (*CCSL* 142:88–89). Il faut lire dans le même sens: *Mor.* 22.17.42 (*CCSL* 143A:1121–22), 9.38.61 (*CCSL* 143:500–501), 24.2.2 (*CCSL* 143B:1189–90).

44. Straw, *Gregory,* surtout aux 147–50, 162–78. Il faut voir en particulier certaines formules de Grégoire qui vont clairement à l'encontre des allégations de docétisme avancées par Dudden (*Gregory,* 2:329–35) à son égard: *Hom.Ev.* 38.3 (*PL* 76:1283BC); *Hom.Ez.* 2.1.15 (*CCSL* 142:219–20). Lire à ce sujet: J. Lebon, "Le prétendu docétisme de la christologie de Grégoire le Grand," *RTAM* 1 (1929): 177–201.

45. Cf. Straw, *Gregory,* 148–61.

46. *Adv. Haer.* 3.10.3 (*SC* 211:124).

47. *De resurrectione carnis liber* 8 (*PL* 2:806AB).

48. *Hom.Ez.* 2.2.5 (*CCSL* 142:228).

49. Dagens, *Grégoire,* 174; l'italique en fin de paragraphe est de nous.

50. *Cant.* 21 (*SC* 314:103).

51. *Cant.* 3 (*SC* 314:71).

52. *Cant.* 16 (*SC* 314:95).

53. *Cant.* 13 (*SC* 314:91). Alors que pour Origène (*Hom. in Cant.* 1.4; *Comm. in Cant.* 1 [*GCS* 8:33, 101]), le "nom répandu comme un parfum" symbolise la diffusion du nom de Jésus "per orbem terrae et per uniuersum mundum" grâce à l'action missionnaire de l'Eglise, l'image évoque bien pour Grégoire l'idée de la divinité invisible qui se donne à la connaissance de l'homme dans la personne visible du Verbe incarnée.

54. *Mor.* 29.12.23 (*CCSL* 143B:1449–50).

55. *Mor.* 29.12.23–13.25 (*CCSL* 143B:1449–51).

56. *Cant.* 13 (*SC* 314:91).

57. *Cant.* 21 (*SC* 314:103).

58. *Mor.* 7.2.2 (*CCSL* 143:335.18–22): "Sed is quem *intus* homo reliquerat assumpta carne, *foris* apparuit Deus; cumque se *exterius* praebuit, expulsum *foras* hominem ad *interiora* reuocavit, ut iam damna sua uideat, iam poenam suae caecitatis ingemiscat." L'italique veut montrer toute la force du mouvement suggéré par Grégoire. Il faut lire dans le même sens *Mor.* 8.19.35 (*CCSL* 143:406–7).

59. *Cant.* 19 (*SC* 314:101).

60. *Hom.Ez.* 1.5.16 (*CCSL* 142:66): "Descensio ergo ueritatis ascensio facta est humilitatis nostrae." On trouvera également des considérations très explicites de Grégoire sur ce thème en *Mor.* 2.20.35 (*CCSL* 143:81–82).

6

PAUL MEYVAERT

A Letter of Pelagius II Composed by Gregory the Great

An article in *History and Theory,* published in 1969, described two varieties of historical writing,[1] and suggested that the protagonists of these two genres could be characterized either as butterflies or as caterpillars. It did me the honor of including me among the caterpillars.[2] The caterpillar is a humble creature, not given, as the butterfly is, to overarching theories about historical data. It limits its efforts and keeps nibbling away, persistently, at every corner of a particular leaf. "Long days spent examining evidence are [occasionally] interrupted by the lightning pleasure of discovery, of creating a bit of history where there previously had been none . . . [It is] the pleasure of isolating the areas where the pattern of common sense seems interrupted, of spotting the problem, and of solving it—in short, the pleasure of unpuzzling some element of the past."[3] In good caterpillar fashion—without much hope now of ever evolving into a butterfly—I have been nibbling for some time at a small leaf in the forest of early medieval papal history.

In book 3 of his *History of the Lombards,* Paul the Deacon has a very short chapter (20) on Pope Pelagius II: "Finally, after pope Benedict, Pelagius was ordained pontiff of the Roman church without the authority of the emperor, because the Lombards had besieged and surrounded Rome, and no one could leave the city. This Pelagius sent to Elias, bishop of Aquileia, who was unwilling to respect the Three Chapters of the Synod of Chalcedon, a very salutary letter which the blessed Gregory composed while he was still a deacon."[4] Paul does not quote from this letter or tell us his reasons for attributing it to Gregory the Great. No

other medieval writer makes an independent reference to this letter of Pelagius.

I now jump some centuries ahead to the time of Cesare Baronio and his *Annales ecclesiastici,* first published between 1588 and 1607. Baronio tells us he had hunted in vain for a copy of the letter mentioned by Paul the Deacon.[5] Then, out of the blue, he received from one of his French scholarly correspondents, Nicholas Lefèvre, a whole bunch of documents dealing with the Three Chapters, copied from a manuscript he owned (the present Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS latin 1682, of the ninth century).[6] This collection of texts—probably originally assembled around the year 600—included not one but three letters of Pope Pelagius, all addressed to bishop Elias of Aquileia, and all dealing with the Three Chapters. To this day the Paris manuscript remains our only medieval source for these letters of Pelagius II.[7] Baronio published them in volume 10 of his *Annales,* and ascribed the authorship of all three to Gregory the Great.[8]

Faced with Paul's allusion to a single letter and the manuscript evidence of three letters, modern scholars have experienced a certain perplexity. Ludwig Hartmann decided to include the three letters of Pelagius in an appendix to the *Monumenta Germaniae Historica* edition of Gregory's *Registrum.*[9] In a footnote to the third and longest letter, he quotes Paul the Deacon and adds: "Learned men [viri docti] think that this is the letter Paul is alluding to. But I dare not assert that what Paul the Deacon says is true. He could be referring to one of the previous letters [namely, letters 1 or 2]."[10]

A few years later Eduard Schwartz again published the letters, together with the other pieces from the Paris manuscript, in his edition of the acts of the Fifth Ecumenical Council.[11] Schwartz's comments display a certain animus toward the *Monumenta* editors of Gregory's *Registrum:*

> Pope Pelagius once again dealt at length with the matter of the Three Chapters in the third and longest letter, a letter which some men, unlearned [indocti] if I am not mistaken, believed had been composed by Gregory when he was still a deacon. Paul the Deacon gave credence to these men when he wrote the chapter of his History . . . The inventors of this rumor [fabula] seem to have known not three but only one letter. But the three letters are so

> interlinked through argument and vocabulary [inter se et argumentis et orationis similitudine conexae] that either all or none of them must be attributed to the same pontiff [namely, Pelagius].[12]
>
> . . . A facetious reason, therefore, caused the *Monumenta Germaniae* editors to insert the letters of Pelagius in an unbecoming place, namely, in an appendix to Gregory's letters. Their only ground for doing so was that rumor [fabula] concerning the third letter, which I have already refuted above.[13]

Schwartz, the great editor of the ecumenical councils, is an imposing authority, and echoes of his views are naturally to be found in the literature. In the article on Pelagius II in the *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique,* we read: "La lettre, ou plutôt le long mémoire que remit Pélage II aux envoyés d'Aquilée, tire tout son intérêt du fait qu'elle présente, de l'attitude du Saint-Siège dans l'affaire des Trois-Chapitres, une explication qu'on a pu considérer comme définitive . . . Paul Diacre s'est fait l'écho d'un on-dit qui attribuait au diacre Grégoire (tout récemment revenu de Constantinople) la rédaction de cette pièce. Rien n'est moins certain, selon Ed. Schwartz . . . les trois lettres sortent de la même plume. Mais il va sans dire que la chancellerie pontificale a dû aider le pape dans la préparation de ce document."[14] Other, more recent writers, such as Jeffrey Richards in his biography of Gregory[15] or Robert Eno in *The Rise of the Papacy,*[16] seemingly unaware of Schwartz's strictures, and without any discussion of the problem, accept the Gregorian authorship of the third and longest letter, on the basis of Paul the Deacon's statement.

Schwartz denied the Gregorian authorship of the letters because he was convinced that Paul the Deacon was only recording an unfounded rumor *(fabula).* Nothing in Schwartz's commentary, however, suggests that he ever sat down to think the matter out. Thus, since none of the letters carries a date, one can wonder whether Gregory might have returned from his stint as apocrisarius at Constantinople in time to help Pelagius with all or part of this correspondence. Again, since he believed the three letters were from the same pen, Schwartz could have tried, through a comparison with Gregory's other works, to show why this pen could not be that of Gregory.

It sometimes pays to consult older writers. Schwartz and Hartmann would have found food for thought in the remarks of Dom

Denys de Sainte Marthe, the Maurist editor of Gregory's works. In his *Life of Gregory,* which introduces his edition, the Maurist says this about the third and longest letter: "This letter should be read in its entirety. No one reading it, unless, indeed, he be a stranger to Gregory's works, can possibly doubt that it is his offspring: it is redolent of Gregorian diction and his method of explaining Scripture."[17]

Some scholars have thought they could detect differences in attitude or personality between the author of the first two letters, and that of the third. Frederick Dudden, in his biography of Gregory, alludes to the "gentle and persuasive" tone of the first two letters and contrasts this with the harsh tone of the third, which, on the basis of Paul the Deacon's statement, he accepted as Gregory's work:

> The stern deacon, with his immense veneration for the Roman See and his detestation of schism, strengthened by his observation of ecclesiastical conditions in the East, was not disposed to treat leniently what he regarded as nothing less than sinful contumacy. The tone of the "very useful letter" [Paul the Deacon's phrase] which he composed and sent in the name of Pelagius to the Istrian bishops, is very different from that of the two former epistles. As mildness had been found ineffectual, Gregory endeavoured to bring his opponents to a better disposition by severity. He sternly upbraided them for their self-opinionated obstinacy, and then proceeded to deal at considerable length with the old arguments.[18]

A diametrically opposite assessment is offered by Trevor Gervase Jalland in his Gifford Lectures of 1942 on "the Church and the papacy": Pelagius's "third letter displays a significant change of tone. It strikes a note of gentle persuasiveness and of friendly discussion, one not always prominent in episcopal arguments with opponents. 'Holy Church attaches more value to the goodness of faithful hearts than to the strict use of words.' 'It is the content rather than the words which matters.' There can be little doubt that here is the hand of Gregory."[19]

Whatever the impression these letters make, there can be no disagreement that the third and longest letter presents in the fullest form all the arguments concerning Rome's position on the Three Chapters. It aims to persuade Elias, bishop of Aquileia, and the other Istrian bishops to abandon their "schismatic" stand.[20] It is

less a letter than a treatise. And it is certainly this treatise, and *not* the two other letters of Pelagius II, that Gregory the Great himself had in mind when, in August 592, he sent a letter to a group of north Italian bishops, urging them to return to the true fold. Here we read: "Wherefore, so that all doubts may be removed, and your minds reach full satisfaction with respect to the Three Chapters, I have judged it expedient to send you the book [liber] which my predecessor of holy memory, Pope Pelagius, wrote on this subject. I have full confidence that this book—if you are willing to read it over and over, and put aside the spirit of wilful self-defense—will lead you to return to union with us."[21] Gregory presents the book *(liber)* as the work of his predecessor. He gives no hint that he helped to prepare it. But the hope he expresses that, when read "over and over," it will persuade the bishops to return to the Roman fold, shows that he saw no need to improve on its statements. Since Gregory was always ready, even eager, to present his own reflections on any matter of ecclesiastical importance, his failure to add anything to Pelagius's treatment provides a subtle clue about authorship: there would be no need to modify or improve on this treatise, if Gregory had already caused it to express his own views when composing it himself, for Pelagius.

The problem of the three letters of Pelagius is capable of a full and adequate solution. It can be approached from numerous angles, and all lead to the same conclusion: letters 1 and 2 are not by the same author as letter 3, and this last letter was unquestionably written by Gregory the Great.[22] Today we possess some superb tools to help us with such an investigation: namely, the massive *Corpus christianorum* concordance to Gregory's works[23] and the Brepols CD-ROM containing the *Cetedoc Library of Christian Latin Texts.*[24] Not all the evidence gathered in such a quest is suitable for presentation in a brief essay.[25] Let me therefore sketch some avenues of exploration and dwell on a few important points.

A careful analysis reveals numerous differences between the first two letters and the third. For example, a look at the final clausulae shows that letter 3 was not written by the same person as letters 1 and 2, for these last letters closely follow the rules of the cursus (planus, tardus, and velox), while letter 3 does not. Dag Norberg has demonstrated that in Gregory's correspondence a contrast exists between the personal letters dictated in their entirety

by Gregory—where, as in his other works, there is no systematic use of the cursus—and the business letters drawn up, on Gregory's instructions, by the papal notaries, which follow the clausulae rules much more faithfully. Letter 3 seems on a par with Gregory's normal habits.[26]

Another point of contrast is the constant pairing of words in letters 1 and 2, in which I counted more than fifty instances of what could be termed "bureaucratese padding." These include such phrases as "to hold and possess," "to damn and anathematize," "to accept and confirm," "to exhort and admonish," "through legates and representatives."[27] It looks almost as if the writers had a thesaurus at hand while composing the letters! Letter 3 lacks this element.

But the most striking feature is the vocabulary of letter 3, which, more than anything else, betrays Gregory's hand. Letters 1 and 2 lack his characteristic expressions and turns of phrase.[28] Dom de Sainte Marthe was right: one would need to be a total stranger to Gregory's works not to perceive that the third letter was his child. Let me present just a few instances. Gregory is extremely fond of the construction *tanto/quanto.* It is found more than a thousand times in his works. This construction is absent from letters 1 and 2 but appears four times in letter 3: for example, "Pensate quaeso, si non *tanto* acriora tormenta promeruit *quanto* pluriora conscripsit" (122.28–29).[29] Note also two other Gregorian elements here: the balancing of similar-sounding endings (prome*ruit*/conscrip*sit*)—a feature found throughout letter 3, but not in letters 1 and 2[30]—and the occurrence of the verb *pensare,* a great favorite of Gregory, which is found thirteen times in letter 3, but never in letters 1 and 2.[31]

Gregory tends to express his thought in set groups of words, frequently repeated and brought into play with each other. For those who would like a striking illustration of this, I have prepared an example that gives a single sentence from letter 3—playing on the ideas of cold and heat—and numerous parallels drawn from Gregory's other works.[32] This example shows the kind of evidence that our new research tools allow us to generate. By multiplying similar instances throughout the length of letter 3, it becomes evident that the Gregorian authorship of this document can be established beyond any reasonable doubt, on the basis of vocabulary alone.

But there are other threads to link letter 3 with Gregory's works. Several scriptural quotations found in the letter occur elsewhere, used to make similar points.[33] There is an allegorical interpretation of Jer. 8.22 that is fully Gregorian in flavor and probably prompted the comment by the Maurist editor quoted above.[34] There is also, interestingly, a phrase that seems to presuppose a passage from Gregory's *Moralia* as its background. At one point in the letter the author exclaims: "ecce in cunctis mundi partibus sancta et universalis ecclesia unitatis suae radiis fulget" (113.4). In the *Moralia* Gregory comments on the North Star (Arcturus): "Quid namque Arcturi nomine qui, in caeli axe constitutus, septem stellarum radiis fulget, nisi Ecclesia uniuersalis exprimitur."[35] Note that this is the only patristic text of the CD-ROM that identifies the idea of a radiant star with that of the universal church. Meeting Gregory's *Moralia*—a work he began during his stay at Constantinople—brings us back to the historical context of the letters of Pelagius.

It is assumed that Pelagius II sent his deacon Gregory as apocrisarius to Constantinople soon after he became bishop of Rome, in 579. A letter of Pelagius to Gregory shows he was still in the East in October 584,[36] and a donation of Gregory to his own monastery, dated 28 December 587, shows him settled back in Rome.[37] He probably returned to Italy in 585 or 586. It would be natural to conclude that Pelagius's letters 1 and 2 were written by papal notaries while Gregory was at Constantinople and that letter 3 was written by Gregory between the time of his return to Rome and the death of Pelagius in 590. But was this was really the case? Letter 3 holds a surprise for us here.

If a document is to reveal all its secrets, no aspect can be left unexplored—perhaps I should say, "unnibbled." In the present case particular attention must be paid to every mention of a Greek text in letter 3. Thus we find an allusion to "many old Greek manuscripts [plerique Graeci antiquiores codices]" of the Council of Chalcedon, brought in to prove that this council originally had six and not seven sessions, as some later manuscripts might have suggested.[38] Then there is a reference to "many manuscripts" of the commentary of Gregory of Nyssa on the Canticle of Canticles that were consulted ("sicut inveniri in plerisque codicibus solet") to check on a passage that contained praise of Origen.[39] Since no Latin

translation of this commentary is known, the allusion here must be to Greek manuscripts of the work.[40]

Another interesting allusion to a Greek writer in letter 3 concerns Theodoret of Cyr. Theodoret had written a work against Cyril of Alexandria that favored Nestorius, but he was afterward considered to have changed sides. This made Theodoret's other works more acceptable.[41] Now, the Latin version of the acts of the Council of Chalcedon, used by the author of letter 3, had quoted a passage from Theodore of Mopsuestia—considered a heretic—asserting that the Canticle of Canticles was no more than a love song composed by Solomon to win over his beloved.[42] The author of letter 3 rejoices to be able to quote a passage from Theodoret's commentary on the Canticle of Canticles dismissing this "heretical" theory about the nature of the Canticle: "not only do we receive his other works [that is, Theodoret's], but we even use them against adversaries."[43] Since there is no evidence that Theodoret's commentary on the Canticle was ever translated into Latin, this provides yet another instance of an appeal to a Greek work.

These references to Greek works and multiple Greek manuscripts raise a question about the background for Pelagius's third letter. We can doubt that Rome, at this time, possessed numerous Greek codices of the acts of Chalcedon, numerous Greek manuscripts of Gregory of Nyssa's commentary on the Canticle, or many Greek manuscripts containing the works of Theodoret of Cyr. It is likewise difficult to conceive that one of Pelagius II's Roman notaries would take pride in citing the Greek commentaries of Theodoret and Gregory of Nyssa to prove a point or to counter the adversaries of the Church. But these references take on a new meaning if we connect them with Gregory the Great, and link them with his stay in the East. Pelagius II—perhaps frustrated at the reaction of the Istrian bishops to his first two letters—must have appealed to Gregory for help in dealing with the Istrian schism while his deacon was still at Constantinople. The third letter shows us Gregory apparently writing from a Greek milieu and gathering material there for a treatise on the issue of the Three Chapters.

Gregory persistently maintained that he did not know any Greek.[44] Nonetheless, one can wonder whether his five or six years in the imperial city did not endow him with at least a very rudimentary

knowledge of the language, and this may find confirmation in a few scattered references to Greek words.[45] But more important than this, his later correspondence reveals that he had some good and close friends in Constantinople, such as the bilingual and devout courtier, Narses, who were willing and eager to help him.[46] One letter of Gregory to Narses, sent in 595, is of great importance here. Gregory at the time was on the point of replying to a letter from the patriarch of Constantinople, but wished to delay his reply until he could obtain some further information about the acts of the Council of Ephesus. He writes to Narses:

> Since the acts of the Council of Chalcedon were at one point falsified by the church of Constantinople,[47] I suspect that something similar may have occurred with regard to the acts of the Council of Ephesus. I therefore beg your charity to make a thorough search to find some old manuscripts of the acts of this council, to see if any similar meddling with the text can be found there. If you do find such a copy please send it to me. I promise to return it as soon as I have examined it. The more recent exemplars are not always to be trusted, and this state of doubt has made me want to delay my reply to Bishop John until the matter can be verified.[48]

Here we meet some of the elements noted above: suspicion that later texts were interpolated and an attempt to clarify the matter by consulting some of the oldest Greek manuscripts. Gregory considered not Rome, but Constantinople, the best place for such a search. His interest in the commentaries on the Canticle of Canticles by Gregory of Nyssa and Theodoret may have been spurred initially by a desire to see how they reacted to the theory of Theodore of Mopsuestia. But dipping into these commentaries on the Canticle—no doubt with the help of friends like Narses—must have awakened other, more spiritual, interests. Not long after becoming bishop of Rome, Gregory himself set about commenting on the Canticle. Only a fragment of his homilies on the Canticle survives.[49] When examining this fragment, as well as Gregory's other works, it will be prudent to keep in mind Gregory's exploration of the Greek commentaries on the Canticle.[50] In any case the "Greek" elements of letter 3 lead us to Constantinople, and furnish additional and unexpected proof concerning the author-

ship of the letter. What must remain uncertain is whether Gregory completed his treatise for Pelagius before or only after his return to Rome.

Gregory's exploration of the libraries in Constantinople may have resulted in other discoveries. The third letter of Pelagius is the first document to cite texts from the Latin compilation of Marius Mercator, a Latin monk who at the time of the theological debates of the early fifth century had settled in Thrace and had remained in very close touch with the party in Constantinople that espoused the cause of Cyril.[51] Gregory quotes several "obnoxious" passages drawn from Theodoret's work against Cyril, in the version of Marius Mercator, adding that these passages of Theodoret had long remained hidden ("ea quae dudum latuerunt praua scripta").[52] It looks as if Gregory had only recently uncovered them, and more likely in Constantinople than in Rome.

Although issued in the name of Pelagius, letter 3 reflects the mind and spirit of Gregory the Great. He is convinced of the rectitude of his own stand, but seeks to convince others by argument—one should note the appeals to "reasoning"—rather than to force an assent. I agree with Jalland's appraisal of this letter, cited above.[53] This is the Gregory we know from the *Moralia:* "Those rule with severity and force who do not seek to correct their subjects by calmly reasoning with them, but rather hasten domineeringly to compel their assent."[54] And elsewhere: "Holy Church says: 'Do not consent to my statements because I am in a position of authority, but aim rather through reasoning to determine their truth.' "[55] Reasoning may of course eventually show that it is those in authority who are wrong. Gregory was aware of this possibility: "All of us who love God are channels of truth, and often he speaks to me through others, and to others through me. The 'auctoritas boni verbi' should be present in such a way that the one who governs should freely say what he sees to be true, and the subject should not refrain from contributing what he perceives to be true . . . So in their speech the superior should practice humble authority, and the inferior free humility."[56]

This view underlies his explanation of the change of mind Pope Vigilius underwent concerning the Three Chapters. The bishops of Istria had argued that in their refusal to accept the condemnation of the Three Chapters they were the ones who were being faithful

to Rome, since Vigilius also had originally refused to do so, but had later capitulated to imperial power.[57] Gregory argues that changing one's mind is not necessarily reprehensible, especially when one has tried, strenuously and tenaciously, to defend one's first position. For a change of mind then shows that one has had to overcome inner resistance, convinced now that the truth lies elsewhere. Truth, when perceived, must always be followed.[58] He goes on to recall that the apostle Paul at first strongly resisted Christianity, and even persecuted Christians, but was then won over to Christ; likewise, the apostle Peter at first wanted Gentiles converted to Christianity to be circumcised, but then reversed his position after Paul had publicly upbraided him.

Let me conclude by asking my readers to ponder ("pensate," I hear Gregory say) these words taken from letter 3:

> Dear brethren, do you think that to Peter, who was reversing his position [sibi dissimilia docenti, "contradicting himself"], one should have replied: We refuse to hear what you are saying since you previously taught the opposite? If in the matter of the Three Chapters one position was held while truth was being sought, and a different position was adopted after truth had been found, why should a change of position be imputed a crime to this See which is humbly venerated by all in the person of its founder? For what is reprehensible is not to change one's stand, but to entertain fickle opinions [non enim mutatio sententiae, sed inconstantia sensus in culpa est]. Now if the mind remains unwavering in seeking to know what is right, why should you object when it abandons its ignorance and reformulates its position?[59]

That is an interesting line of argument, one must admit! As long as these words were attributed to Pelagius II, they attracted little notice. Now that we can be sure they are Gregory's, they deserve our attention.

NOTES

1. Ihor Sevcenko, "Two Varieties of Historical Writing," *History and Theory* 8 (1969): 332–45.
2. Ibid., 335n.9.
3. Ibid., 336.

4. *MGH, Scriptores rerum Langobardicarum et Italicarum saec. VI–IX* (Hanover, 1878), 103: "Denique post Benedictum papam Pelagius Romanae ecclesiae pontifex absque iussione principis ordinatus est, eo quod Langobardi Romam per circuitum obsiderent, nec posset quisquam a Roma progredi. Hic Pelagius Heliae Aquileiensi episcopo, nolenti tria capitula Calchidonensis synodi suscipere, epistulam satis utilem misit. Quam beatus Gregorius, cum esset adhuc diaconus, conscripsit."

5. See *Annales ecclesiastici,* ed. Antonius Pagi, 38 vols. (Lucca, 1738–59), 10:417 (at no. xxviii): "Porro dictam Pelagii epistolam . . . diu optatam, frustra quaesitam, Dei magno benificio, post editionem septimi huius et octaui etiam tomi, cum iam desperassemus omnino accepimus eam Parisiis missam a uiro disertissimo mei amantissimo Nicolao Fabro . . . simulque duas alias eiusdem Pelagii Papae, siue dixerimus Gregorii ab auctore qui scriptsit denominando, epistolas breuiores eodem argumento ad eosdem Istriae schismaticos antea datas."

6. The letter of Nicolas LeFèvre to Baronio (dated 1 February 1599) that accompanied these documents was published by Raymundus Albericius in *Venerabilis Caesaris Baronii . . . epistolae et opuscula,* 7 vols. (Rome, 1770), 3:262–65 (especially 264): "Cum iis etiam epistolas tres Pelagii P.R., et quartam Innocentii Episcopi Maromae Ciuitatis de Histrico schismate . . . ex antiquis membranis descriptas uisum est ideo adiungere, quod non ingratas eas tibi fore existimauerim: historiam enim continent a nullo alio, quod sciam memoriae traditam, locumque in tuo Septimo Annali percommode sibi inuenient."

7. The *Catalogue général des manuscrits latins,* vol. 2 (Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale, 1940), 123, indicates the presence of a note on fol. 100 of B.N. lat. 1682, in the hand of Etienne Baluze. The full text reads: "Codex iste fuit olim doctissimi uiri Nicolai Fabri, qui ex eo descripsit epistolas Constantini, Pelagii II. Papae, epistolam decem Episcoporum ad Mauritium Imperatorem, Mauritii Imperatoris epistolam ad sanctum Gregorium Papam, collationem cum Seuerianis et ad Baronium misit. Quarum omnium rerum aliud ullum exemplar alibi extare hactenus est incompertum. Quare patet quanti aestimandus sit hic codex, qui praeterea continet etiam uigilii Papae constitutum pro damnatione trium capitulorum hactenus ineditum." From Colbert the manuscript passed into the Royal Library and thus into the Bibliothèque Nationale. It would be interesting to know where LeFèvre had acquired this ninth-century manuscript and also to determine its provenance more fully. LeFèvre's copy to Baronio survives in Vatican City, Bib. Vat. Barber. lat. 498.

8. See note 5 above.

9. *Gregorii I Papae Registrum epistolarum, MGH Epistolae,* 2 vols. (Berlin: Weidmann's, 1891–99), 2:442–67 (app. 3).

10. Ibid., 2:449: "De hac epistula, ut uiri docti coniecerunt, agi uidetur. Sed an uerum sit, quod Paulus tradit, affirmare non ausim; neque certo etiam de praecedentibus epistulis agitur."

11. *Concilium uniuersale Constantinopolitanum sub Iustiniano habitum,* ed. E. Schwartz, in *ACO,* 4 vols. (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1927–82), 4:2:101–37 (the three letters of Pelagius occupy pp. 105–32).

12. *ACO* 4:2:xxiii: "tum denique totam trium capitulorum causam late papa exposuit in epistula tertia et longissima, quam a Gregorio cum diaconus esset, scriptam esse postea scire sibi uidebantur homines, ni fallor, indocti, quibus fidem tribuit Paulus diaconus . . . fabulae inuentores unam tantum, non tres epistulas nouisse uidentur; quae tamen adeo inter se et argumentis et orationis similitudine conexae sunt, ut aut omnes aut nulla ab ipso pontifice abiudicandae sint."

13. *ACO* 4:2:xxv,n.1: "Lepido casu accidit Monumentorum Germaniae editoribus, ut Pelagii epistulas tres ex codice 1682 loco inepto recenserent, in Gregorii epistularum appendice, nullam aliam ob causam nisi propter fabulam illam de tertia epistula, quam supra refutaui, decem uero episcoporum ad Mauricium Mauriciique ad Gregorium epistulas, quas non minus inepte Gregorii registro inculcauere, ex Baronii editione repeterent, quoniam codex inueniri non potuisset. sed in ipso codice 1682 secuntur Pelagii epistulas. luculento exemplo demonstratur quam sit peruersum propter ficticium quendam ordinem chronologicum codicum collectiones traditas neglegere atque perturbare. altera res est editio philologice instituenda, altera regesta in historicorum usum confecta." One wishes that in this case Schwartz himself had paid more attention to the real historical data!

14. *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique,* vol. 12 (Paris: Letouzey et Ane, 1933), col. 671 (the article is signed "E. Amann").

15. Richards, *Consul,* 39–40.

16. Robert B. Eno, *The Rise of the Papacy* (Wilmington, Del., 1990), 140–42.

17. *PL* 75:276A: "Digna sane est haec epistola, quae ex integro legatur. Nemo autem legens, nisi in S. Gregorii scriptis peregrinus, dubitare poterit, an sit ipsius fetus; quippe sapit Gregorianam phrasim, et explicandae sacrae Scripturae methodum. Idem sit de duabus aliis criterium. Hinc eas hoc loco inserendas, aliqua saltem ex parte iudicauimus." Earlier (*PL* 75:274A) Dom de Sainte Marthe had written: "Unum est trium illarum epistolarum argumentum, unus scopus, stylus plane non absimilis; proindeque idem omnium scriptor Gregorius a quo unam saltem scriptam esse Pauli [Diaconi] constat testimonio." The Maurist was

dependent on Baronio for the text of the letters. It was, however, the style of letter 3 that convinced him of its Gregorian authorship.

18. Dudden, *Gregory,* 1:208.

19. Trevor Gervase Jalland, *The Church and the Papacy: An Historical Study* (London, 1944), 356.

20. For a succinct account of the Three Chapters controversy, see Jeffrey Richards, *The Popes and the Papacy in the Early Middle Ages, 476–752* (London, 1979), 139–61. For an even briefer, but adequate, statement, see *Encyclopedia of the Early Church,* 2 vols. (New York, 1992), 2:838.

21. *Ep.* 2.43 (*CCSL* 140:132.37–43): "Vt igitur de tribus capitulis animis uestris ablata dubietate possit satisfactio abundanter infundi, librum, quem ex hac re sanctae memoriae decessor meus Pelagius papa scripserat uobis utile iudicaui transmittere. Quem si, deposito uoluntariae defensionis studio, puro uigilantique corde saepius uolueritis relegere, eum uos per omnia secuturos et ad unitatem nostram reuersuros nihilominus esse confido."

22. Letters 1 and 2 obviously deal with the same topic as letter 3—namely, the schism of the Istrian bishops—but this, of itself, is not sufficient to establish a unity of authorship for the three documents—a point frequently overlooked by some earlier writers.

23. *Thesaurus sancti Gregorii Magni* (Brepols, 1986).

24. The CD-ROM was produced in 1991.

25. I plan to present the full evidence in a volume of *CCSL* that will collect works of Gregory not included elsewhere (the *Libellus responsionum,* the letters not included in the *Registrum,* Gregory's liturgical prayers, etc.).

26. I base this paragraph on a letter from Dag Norberg (personal communication, 6 June 1988), which he kindly sent in reply to a query I had put to him about the cursus in the three letters. I quote from his letter: "As for Pelagius' letters 1, 2 and 3 in Appendix III in Ewald-Hartmann [the *MGH* edition of the *Registrum*], a look at the clausulae makes it clear that 3 is not written by the same person as 1 and 2. If you limit your examination to the use of *cursus planus, tardus* and *uelox,* you will at once see that before a point or a note of interrogation, only these forms of *cursus* occur in letters 1 and 2 (the only exceptions are 444.28 *cogitatione eius* and 445.15 *possideamus studio;* 444.24 *Abrâham* may be accentuated on the penultimates). But in letter 3 about 36% of the ends of sentences do not show these three forms of the *cursus.* All the 3 letters are full of citations from other authors which I have naturally not taken account of.

"And figures of this kind must always be taken with a pinch of salt. But the tendency is clear. The use of clausulae in 1 and 2 does

not correspond to the use that Sister Brazzel [*The Clausulae in the Writings of St. Gregory the Great* (Washington, D.C., 1939)] has found in the authentic works of Gregory; this one does more resemble that of letter 3."

When the evidence for the *cursus* is linked with the other evidence showing disparity between letter 3 and the first two, it acquires extra force.

27. The following samples refer to the page and line of Schwartz's edition of the letters in *ACO* 4:2 (see note 11, above): 105.5, "non maliuolae uoluntatis aut dissimulationis uel neglegentiae"; 105.6, "temporalis qualitas et hostilis necessitas"; 105.8, "cum graui fletu ac gemitu"; 105.14, "per labores atque sollicitudinem"; 105.15, "pacem nobis interim uel quietem"; 105.17, "hortantes et obsecrantes"; 105.24, "quassari poterit uel mutari"; 106.9, "suscepit atque redegit"; 106.18–19, "per omnia ueneramur, tenemus, defendimus atque . . . praedicamus"; 106.20, "suscepit atque firmauit"; 106.21, "ueneramur, custodimus atque defendimus"; 106.22, "aut sapit aut credit aut docere praesumit"; 106.23, "damnatum atque anathematizatum"; 106.24, "falsis suspicionibus aut rumoribus"; 106.26–27, "praedicari cognoscitis uel teneri"; 106.28, "explanata atque confirmata"; 106.30, "nulla uobis poterit quaestio uel suspicio."

28. On the other hand there are some words—for example, *diuisio* and *satisfactio*—that keep recurring in letters 1 and 2 but are absent from letter 3: 105.8, "uiscerum nostrorum diuisionem"; 105.17, "ne in diuisione ecclesiae"; 106.24, "in diuisione ecclesiae"; 108.4, "diuisionem ecclesiae"; 108.41, "diuisionis scandalum"; 109.9, "ab errore diuisionis"; 111.33, "in diuisione ecclesiae persistere"; 112.12, "diuisae a sancta ecclesia"; 106.3, "satisfactionem nostram mittere"; 106.35, "satisfactionis reddere rationem"; 107.9–10, "post praesentem satisfactionem nostram"; 108.30, "satisfactione suscepta"; 108.32, "lucidissimamque satisfactionem"; 112.7, "recipiendae satisfactionis sit ratio"; 112.11, "satisfactionis rationem."

29. "*[T]anto* igitur damnis uestris festina debemus consolatione succurrer*e quanto* ea per caritatem cogimur ut nostra senti*re*" (113.12–13); "in hac causa consensus *tanto* post inanis non fu*it quanto* prius duris contradictionum laboribus insudau*it*" (118.46–119.1); "*tanto* debemus in breuitate constringer*e quanto* et uos nobis hac in re non credimus resulta*re*" (129.9–10).

30. Patrick Verbraken made this feature a cornerstone of his proof to show that the commentary on 1 Kings was an authentic work of Gregory; see Verbraken, "Le commentaire de saint Grégoire sur le premier Livre des Rois," *RvBén* 66 (1956): 179–89. As Verbraken remarks

(179), Gregory's thought follows a consistent pattern: "Dans son oeuvre, aucune période, aucune incise presque qui ne soit sur le champ complétée, appuyée, corrigée par une seconde. C'est là le reflet du cheminement secret par lequel serpente cette pensée toujours soucieuse à la fois d'équilibre et de précision." The numerous examples he provides can be paralleled with similar ones from Pelagius's third letter, but not from letters 1 and 2. Here are some instances drawn from letter 3: "tandem dilectionis uestrae scripta suscepi quae non rationis causas quaere*rent,* sed deliberati apud uos iudicii sententia impera*rent*" (112.24–25); "ignem quantum ualui, caritatis accen*di* et tantae scissionis exurere rubiginem uo*lui;* sed impletam prophetae sententiam peccatis exigentibus inue*ni*" (112.29–30); "aptos fructibus palmites atten*do,* sed abscisos a radice uites aspic*io* et sudantes uos operarios cer*no,* sed tamen laborare extra uineam non igno*ro*" (112.38–40); "procella diluuii mundum sub*ruit* et uestra fraternitas arcam fu*git*" (112.41–42); "tota namque corporis compago affici*tur,* si pars eius uel extrema lacera*tur*" (113.8–9); "caritas . . . quae et in amore corda succendit et ut sanctam ecclesiam unitatis ornamento compon*at,* discordes hominum mentes per pacis in se studium lig*at*" (113.22–23).

31. *Pensare* in one form or other is found more than 600 times in Gregory's works, 344 times in the *Moralia* alone. Idiosyncratic vocabulary of this kind provides strong indications of authorship. We can imagine one writer sprinkling his prose with requests to his readers to "think this" or "consider that," while another writer might beg us to "ponder this" or "weigh that." Different pet words can express the same thought, but their use and frequency provide us with clues to authorship. Some rarer words in letter 3 also deserve close attention, such as "ui *districtae* inuentionis increpamur" (113.17): *district-* in one form or another occurs more than 590 times in Gregory! Note likewise "sibi *dissimilia* docenti" (119.16) and "*sibimet* ipsa *dissimilis* non est" (126.39): *dissimil-* is found 59 times in Gregory, twice as *sibimet dissimilis.*

32. A telling "Gregorian" passage from letter 3 of Pope Pelagius II: "*Pensate . . . quanto mentis frigore* fraternitas vestra *torpuerit, quae nec confricta* [leg. *confricata*?] *recalescit*" (*MGH, Ep.,* 2:450.7–9). *Pensare* is a favorite Gregorian verb (see note 31, above). Note the conjunction of the other words that make up the phrase. They betray Gregory's intimate thought and his manner of putting things. Compare the quotation with the following passages:

Hom.Ez. 2.6 (*CCSL* 142:313.610–12), "peccatores . . . qui *in mentis frigore* dilapsi sub peccati sui umbra *torpuerunt*"

Mor. 20.12.23 (*CCSL* 143A:1021.46–47), "amisso igne caritatis *ex frigore mentis* convaluit"
Mor. 29.30.58 (*CCSL* 143B:1475.16), "in culpae *frigore mantes* sequacium"
Hom.Ev. 2.30.5 (*PL* 76:1223A), "ab omni corde quod replet *torporem frigoris* excutit"
Hom.Ez. 2.9 (*CCSL* 142:362.245–46), "unde et ad *torporem frigoris* lapsi sunt"
Mor. 20.14.29 (*CCSL* 143A:1025.106–7), "et contra *torporem frigoris*"
Hom.Ez. 2.10 (*CCSL* 142:389.354), "in mente peccantium quae sint *torporis frigora* videant"
Hom.Ez. 2.1 (*CCSL* 142:212.201–2), "Captivitas enim nostra quae *torporis frigore*"
Mor. 17.24.34 (*CCSL* 143A:870.3), "qui ut *torporis frigore* . . . corda constringeret"
Hom.Ez. 2.10 (*CCSL* 142:385.203), "quam ille in *torporis frigore* possedit"
Hom.Ev. 2.30.5 (*PL* 76:1223C), "*torporis frigus* recedit"
Hom.Ez. 2.6 (*CCSL* 142:309.482–83), "in perfidiae suae *frigore torpuit*"
Hom.Ez. 2.3 (*CCSL* 142:250.442–43), "Multum valde est quod per ea animus *refricatur* ad calorem, ne iniquitatis suae *frigore torpescat*"
Hom.Ev. 1.11.1 (*PL* 76:1115A), "et per ea quae usu didicit, quasi *confricatus, incalescat*"
Cant. 3 (*CCSL* 144:4.25–26), "a *torpore* suo anima per sermones suae consuetudinis *refricata recalescat*"
Mor. 4.23.42 (*CCSL* 143:188.8–10), "ad conditoris sui desiderium *recalescit,* cum *torporem* negligentiae deserit et *frigus* insensibilitatis"

This list was drawn up with the use of the CD-ROM mentioned above at note 24.

33. For example, Jer. 51.9, "curauimus Babylonem, et non est sanata" (112.28), is cited in *Mor.* 26.31.57 (*CCSL* 143B:1310.15) and *RP* 3.13 (*SC* 382:336.48); Jer. 6.29, "frustra conflauit conflator, scoriae eius non sunt consumptae" (112.31–32), is cited in *Mor.* 18.26.41 (*CCSL* 143A:911.50–12.51) and *RP* 3.13 (*SC* 382:338.77–78).

34. Schwartz, *ACO* 4:2:113.20–27: "Quid enim per resinam, quae *fomentum ignis* est, quae et in ornamentum domus marmora dissipata coniungit, nisi caritas designatur, quae et in amore *corda succendit* et

ut sanctam ecclesiam unitatis ornamento componat, *discordes hominum mentes* per pacis in se studium ligat? Quid per *Galaad, quae 'aceruus testimonii' interpretatur,* nisi in scripturae sacrae altitudine innumera sententiarum densitas dicitur? quid *per medici uocabulum,* nisi unusquisque *praedicator?* quid per non obductam filiae cicatricem, nisi culpa plebis *ante dei oculos* nuda monstatur?" See *Mor.* 14.19.23 (*CCSL* 143A:711.2), "Sulphur quid aliud quam *fomentum ignis* est?"; 18.20.32 (*CCSL* 143A:906.8–9), "iniquorum *corda succendit*"; 33.33.57 (*CCSL* 143B:1723.30), "auditorum *corda succendit*"; 4.13.25 (*CCSL* 143:180.27), "qui *discordes mentes* ducitis"; *RP* 3.24.21 (*SC* 382:420.23–24), "*Galaad aceruus testimonii interpretatur*"; *Hom.Ez.* 1.10 (*CCSL* 142:152.287–88), "quid *praedicator nisi medicus*"; "*ante dei oculos*" (a phrase Gregory is fond of; it occurs fifty-four times elsewhere).

35. *Mor.* 9.11.13 (*CCSL* 143:465.29–31).

36. *MGH, Ep.,* 2:440–41 (app. 2).

37. Ibid., 2:437–39 (app. 1).

38. Schwartz, *ACO* 4:2:128.32–36: "Quia uero et apud eosdem episcopos, qui in Chalcedona resederunt, in ueneratione synodus nonnisi usque ad fidei definitionem fuit, per hoc aperte ostenditur, quod plerique Graeci antiquiores codices continere synodum nonnisi in sex actionibus subiunctis canonibus demonstrantur, ut omnino cetera, quae priuato studio fuerant mota, non habeant." In his letter of 595 to Narses, cited below (see note 46), Gregory implies that at one point ("in uno loco") the Church of Constantinople had falsified the acts of this council.

39. Schwartz, *ACO* 4:2:131.33–35: "An non et Gregorius Nysae urbis episcopus cum canticorum canticum exponit, sicut inueniri in plerisque codicibus solet, magnis Origenem laudibus praefert?" For the passage alluded to, see Gregory of Nyssa's preface to his homilies on the Canticle of Canticles (*PG* 44:763B): "Quod si, cum Origenes plurimum laboris et studii in hunc librum contulerit, nos quoque quod a nobis est elaboratum litteris mandare lubenter statuerimus, nemo nos accuset" (in the Latin rendering of the French humanist Gentian Hervet [1499–1584]).

40. It rather looks as if Gregory thought the passage on Origen might be an interpolation, and so wanted to test the matter. It obviously bothered him that Origen, that great heretic ("Quid namque in heresiarchis Origene deterius") should receive praise from such respectable figures as Eusebius, Jerome, and Gregory of Nyssa. But he argues, "An non et malos a bonis aliquando laudatos nouimus nec tamen eisdem laudibus defensos? . . . sed quia plus causa quam uerba

pensanda sunt, nec istis [i.e., Eusebius, Jerome, and Gregory of Nyssa] sua benignitas nocuit nec illum [i.e., Origen] a reatu proprio fauor alienae adtestationis excusauit" (*ACO* 4:2:131.28,37). Gregory also developed a theory that allowed him to read Origen with a clear conscience and even with spiritual profit—while still maintaining that he was a great heretic! Heretics, he argued, can learn marvelous things, not through direct inspiration from God, but through the Church: "Nonnumquam uero haeretici uera quaedam et sublimia loquuntur, non quo haec diuinitus ipsi percipiunt sed quo ex sanctae Ecclesiae contentione didicerunt; neque haec ad profectum conscientiae sed ad scientiae ostentationem trahunt. Unde fit plerumque ut alta sciendo dicant sed uiuendo quae dicunt nesciant" (*Mor.* 5.27.49; *CCSL* 143: 251.15–20). These words betray someone who while reading a heretic's work had encountered "sublimia." One may suspect from Gregory's borrowings that the heretic was Origen.

41. Schwartz, *ACO* 4:2:129.10–14: "Neque enim Theodoriti omnia scripta damnamus, sed sola quae contra duodecim Kyrilli capitula, sola quae contra rectam fidem aliquando scripsisse monstratur, quae tamen et ipse damnasse cognoscitur, qui in sancta Chalcedonensi synodo uera confessus inuenitur."

42. Schwartz, *ACO* 4:2:131.7–9: "Nam cum Theodorus canticorum canticum uellet exponere et non ad commenta, sed potius ad deliramenta laboretur, per hunc librum Aethiopissae reginae Salomonem blanditum fuisse professus est."

43. Schwartz, *ACO* 4:2:131.9–15: "quod Theodoritus reprehendens nomen quidem eiusdem Theodori supprimit, sed tamen uesaniam patefecit. eiusdem namque libri commenta conscribens ait: 'audio plures canticum canticorum detrahentes et non credentes spiritalem esse librum, fabulas autem quasdam aniculares per uesaniam texentes componere et praesumere dicentes, quia sapiens Salomon ad se ipsum et filiam Pharaonis hunc librum conscripsit.' quomodo ergo nulla scripta eiusdem Theodoriti recipimus, qui illum etiam contra Theodorum adsertorem ueritatis inuenimus?" The passage cited in this quotation is from Theodoret's preface to Bishop John; see *PG* 81:30A.

44. *Ep.* 7.29 (*CCSL* 140:487.6–7), "quamuis in multis occupatus, quamuis Graecae linguae nescius"; 11.55 (*CCSL* 140A:960.24–25), "Nam nos nec Graece nouimus nec aliquod opus aliquando Graece conscripsimus." J. Petersen has argued that these statements must be taken "cum grano salis," and that Gregory knew far more Greek than they suggest; see Petersen, "Did Gregory the Great Know Greek?" in *The Orthodox Churches and the West* (Oxford, 1976), 121–34. But this view has been challenged by G. J. M. Bartelink, "Etymologisierung bei Gre-

gor dem Grossen," *Glotta* 62 (1984): 99–105; and Bartelink, "De kennis van het Grieks bij Gregorius de Grote," in *Noctes Noviomagenses J. C. F. Nuchelmans XIII lustris pr. Kal. Sept. anno Domini MCMLXXXV feliciter peractis rude donato ab amicis oblatae* (Weesp, 1985), 3–18 (presented in English translation elsewhere in this volume).

45. It must be admitted that the instances are few: no more than a dozen in all of Gregory's works. And caution is needed before a Greek source is affirmed. Thus, Gregory's comment on the Greek for *senes* and *prouectiores,* in his Gospel homilies, is taken not from Gregory of Nyssa, as Petersen suggests ("Did Gregory," 128), but straight out of Augustine's comments on Pss. 104.20–22.

46. Four letters of Gregory to Narses survive: *Ep.* 1.6 (October 590), 3.63 (August 593), 6.14 (September 595), and 7.27 (June 597) (*CCSL* 140:7–8, 213–14, 382–83, 483–86). *Ep.* 5.46 (June 595; *CCSL* 140: 338–40) to Theodore, the emperor's physician and also a friend of Gregory, implies that Narses was ailing at the time, and this may indicate why no letters are found later than 597, Narses presumably having died. Gregory's letters are all replies, and his thanks on two occasions for "epistolas" received show that sometimes a bunch of Narses's letters arrrived in Rome at the same time. Gregory, in *Ep.* 7.27 (*CCSL* 140:485.60–62), declined Narses' request that he should write to several named persons in Constantinople with the comment: "bene scit dulcissima uestra magnitudo quia hodie in Constantinopolitana ciuitate, qui de Latino in Graeco dictata bene transferant, non sunt." The implication is clearly that Narses did not need a translator to read Gregory's letters. Nor is there any hint that Gregory had a problem with the letters from Narses. They corresponded in Latin. On Narses see likewise the long note to *Ep.* 1.6 by the *MGH* editors of the *Registrum* (*MGH, Ep.,* 1:7).

47. It is thought that Gregory may here be alluding to canon 28 of Chalcedon, which granted the same degree of primacy possessed by the Old Rome to Constantinople, the New Rome. The Latin translation of the acts of this council, by Dionysius Exiguus, omitted canon 28, and Gregory, on the general principle that Latin manuscripts, when available, were always to be preferred to Greek ones, may have considered this canon about the primacy an interpolation. Gregory's deep mistrust of things Greek—amounting (as Jeffrey Richards has pointed out) almost to racial prejudice—surfaces even in letters to good friends like Narses: see the final phrase in the passage quoted in note 48, below.

48. *Ep.* 6.14 (*CCSL* 140:383.32–84.41): "quia, sicut Chalcedonensis synodus in uno loco ab ecclesia Constantinopolitana falsata est, sic aliquid et in Ephesina synodo factum est. Caritas ergo uestra uetustos

omnino codices eiusdem synodi requirat et illic uideat, si quid tale inuenitur, mihique eundem codicem quem inuenerit transmittat, quem, mox legero, retransmitto. Nouis enim codicibus passim non credat. Ex qua re dubius factus sum et nihil adhuc uolui de hac causa praedicto fratri meo Iohanni episcopo rescribere. Romani autem codices multo ueriores sunt quam Graeci, quia nos uestra sicut non acumina, ita nec imposturas habemus."

49. Edited by P. Verbraken in *CCSL* 144:3–46.

50. Points of contact between Gregory's commentary on the Canticle and that of Theodoret can be found, but on closer inspection they turn out to involve a common source, namely, Origen. For the borrowings from Origen, see my review of Verbraken's edition: P. Meyvaert, "A New Edition of Gregory the Great's Commentaries on the Canticle and I Kings," *JThS* n.s. 19 (1968): 220–23. It could be that Gregory's consultations of Gregory of Nyssa and of Theodoret, made with the help of friends like Narses, were very much ad hoc, for the purpose of his treatise on the Three Chapters, and did not imply any lengthy Latin translations of these works.

51. On Marius Mercator and his collection, see E. Schwartz, *ACO* 1:5 (Berlin, 1924–26), xi–xiv.

52. For the passages in Pelagius II's letter 3 borrowed from Marius Mercator, see Schwartz, *ACO* 4:2:129–30. Gregory's comment on Theodoret (131.1–7) runs: "quis non uideat quanta temeritate plenum sit Theodoriti scripta superbiendo defendere, quae eundem ipsum constat, recta post profitendo, damnasse? dum uero eius et personam recipimus et *ea quae dudum latuerunt praue scripta, reprobamus,* in nullo a sanctae synodi actione deuiamus, quia sola eius haeretica scripta respuentes, et cum synodo adhuc Nestorium insequimur et cum synodo Theodoritum profitentem recta ueneramur. alia vero scripta illius non solum recipimus, sed eis etiam contra adversarios utimur."

53. See above, note 19.

54. *Mor.* 23.13.23 (*CCSL* 143B:1162.14–16): "Cum austeritate enim et potentia imperant, quia subditos suos non tranquille ratiocinando corrigere, sed aspere inflectere dominando festinant." We read a similar comment in *Mor.* 24.25.52 (*CCSL* 143B:1226.11–27.17): "Hunc tumorem per prophetam Dominus in pastoribus increpans ait: 'Vos autem cum austeritate imperabatis eis, et cum potentia.' Ipsa enim bona quae subditis dicunt dominando potius quam consulendo proferunt, quia uidelicet quicquam eis quasi ex aequo dicere semetipsos existimant deiecisse. Singularitate enim gaudent culminis, et non aequalitate conditionis."

55. *Mor.* 8.2.3 (*CCSL* 143:383.32–37): "Quia uero sancta Ecclesia ex magisterio humilitatis instituta, recta quae errantibus dicit, non quasi ex auctoritate praecipit sed ex ratione persuadet, bene nunc dicitur: 'Videte, an mentiar.' Ac si aperte dicat: Ea quae assero nequaquam mihi ex auctoritate credite, sed an uera sint ex ratione pensate." For other comments on this Gregorian topic, see P. Meyvaert, "Gregory the Great and the Theme of Authority," *Spode House Review* 3 (December 1966): 3–12; reprinted, with original pagination retained, in Meyvaert, *Benedict.*

56. *Hom.Ez.* 1.9 (*CCSL* 142:129.220–31): "Et quia omnes qui in Deo uiuimus organa ueritatis sumus, ut saepe per alium mihi, saepe uero aliis loquatur per me, sic nobis boni uerbi inesse auctoritas debet, ut et is qui praeest dicat recta libere, et is qui subest inferre bona humiliter non recuset . . . Inesse ergo ad loquendum priori humilis auctoritas, inesse autem minori libera humilitas debet."

57. One can doubt that Gregory had a full and accurate historical understanding of the events surrounding Pope Vigilius's tribulations almost a half-century earlier. Gregory here argues that Vigilius and those who sided with him were in error, an error due to their ignorance of "Graecitas": "Latini quippe homines et Graecitatis ignari, dum linguam nesciunt, errorem tarde cognouerunt" (Schwartz, *ACO* 4:2:118.16–17). Gregory's underlying idea, however, is an interesting one, since it implies that one part of the Universal Church, the Latin part, had received help and enlightenment from the Greek churches. Such a view fits in completely with the well-established Gregorian principle that no particular church within the Universal Church, not even the Roman church, held a monopoly of good things: "non enim pro locis res sed pro bonis rebus loca amanda sunt." All claims to monopoly went counter to true charity, since they stifled the recognition that there was good to be found elsewhere. On this theme see P. Meyvaert, "Diversity within Unity, a Gregorian Theme," *Heythrop Journal* 4 (1963): 83–110; reprinted, with original pagination retained, in Meyvaert, *Benedict.*

58. Schwartz, *ACO* 4:2:118.19–22: "quorum consensum certe fraternitas uestra despiceret, si ausu praecipiti, priusquam uerum cognoscerent, consensissent; at postquam diu ab eis laboratum est et longo tempore ad iniurias usque certatum, hinc uestra fraternitas penset quia tot labores repente non relinquerent, nisi quae uera sunt agnouissent."

59. Schwartz, *ACO* 4:2:119.16–23: "Numquid, fratres dilectissimi, Petro apostolorum principi sibi dissimilia docenti debuit ad haec uerba respondi: haec quae dicis, audire non possumus, quia aliud ante praedicasti? si igitur in trium capitulorum negotio aliud cum ueritas

quaereretur, aliud autem inuenta ueritate dictum est, cur mutatio sententiae huic sedi in crimine obicitur, quae a cuncta ecclesia humiliter in eius auctore ueneratur? non enim mutatio sententiae, sed inconstantia sensus in culpa est. quando ergo ad cognitionem recti intentio incommutabilis permaneat, quid obstat, si ignorantiam suam deserens uerba permutet?" To see the force of "inconstantia sensus" here, compare the following Gregorian passages: *Mor.* 19.5.8 (*CCSL* 143A: 961.15–16), "Graue autem consilium cordis omnem inconstantiam uagationis expellit"; *Hom.Ez.* 1.3 (*CCSL* 142:44.376–79), "Unde fit plerumque ut et bonum opus eorum minus Deo placeat, quia cum pes mentis in meliori gradu deliberationis inconstanter ponitur, hoc ipsa cogitationis inconstantia accusat"; *RP* 3.18 (*SC* 382:370.26–28), "Pertinacia quippe ex superbia, inconstantia autem ex leuitate generatur"; *RP* 3.23 (*SC* 382:414.17–20), "Qui ergo statum mentis perdidit, subsequenter foras in inconstantiam motionis fluit, atque exteriori mobilitate, indicat, quod nulla interius radice subsistat." Gregory is contrasting a mind that reaches a new position taken up after mature deliberation, and even anxious and painful inner debate, from one ready to change course on a whim.

7

G. J. M. BARTELINK

Pope Gregory the Great's Knowledge of Greek

Translated by Paul Meyvaert

It is usually accepted that Gregory the Great (pope from 590 to 604) had no more than a tenuous, even quite negligible, knowledge of Greek. In the judgment of his biographer, Homes Dudden: "Although he resided some six years in the Greek-speaking capital, he yet never succeeded in mastering even the rudiments of that language."[1] The opinions of Steinacker,[2] Marrou,[3] and Courcelle[4] are not very different. It is a generally accepted fact that knowledge of Greek in the West, from the second half of the fourth century onward, had gradually fallen to a very low level and that education provided only a very elementary knowledge of Greek, although some instruction in Greek remained a traditional part of the school curriculum until the end of late antiquity. In discussing Gregory's knowledge of Greek, one must obviously pay attention to the two places in his correspondence when he himself tells us that he did not know any Greek. In an article in which she argues that Gregory had a sufficient command of Greek to allow him, independently, to draw on some Greek theological writings as literary sources[5]—an opinion whose accuracy we intend to question—Joan Petersen finds it necessary to begin by questioning the validity of these two testimonies. She states that they must not be taken à la lettre, but must be regarded as a topos (a *confessio humilitatis*).

In view of the texts that need to be considered, it seems worthwhile once again to examine this question more closely. We can take as our point of departure Gregory's own statements about his knowledge of Greek. In *Ep.* 7.29, a letter to the priest Anastasius, abbot of

the Neas monastery at Jerusalem, Gregory intervenes as arbiter between this abbot and the bishop of Jerusalem, while at the same time underlining the difficulties under which he labors—namely, his multiple occupations and his ignorance of the Greek language. "Et quamuis in multis occupatus, quamuis Graecae linguae nescius, in contentione tamen uestra iudex resedi."[6] There is no reason to view this statement as an expression of modesty.[7] When placed beside the true reason of his multiple occupations, "Graecae linguae nescius" must mean that Gregory does not know Greek, in other words, does not have a full command of the language. He must no doubt have picked up a certain elementary knowledge of Greek in his schooldays, and he later regularly encountered odd comments on Greek terms while reading Latin works, especially of Christian writers. His stay in the East must also have acquainted him with a certain number of Greek expressions.

We meet a similar text in *Ep.* 11.55, a letter of Gregory to Eusebius of Thessalonica, dealing with the forgeries of a Greek monk named Andrew who had composed some sermons and falsely ascribed them to Gregory: "aliquos etiam sermones scripsit atque eos ex nostro nomine titulauit." Gregory urges Eusebius to destroy any such Greek sermons he may find, since they are spurious: "We do not know Greek, nor have we ever written a Greek work [Nam nos nec Graece nouimus nec aliquod opus aliquando Graece conscripsimus]."[8] It is difficult to imagine that irony or understatement are intended here. Gregory explicitly declares that he does not have a command of Greek, in the passive sense, and thus certainly not in the active sense, such as would permit him to compose in Greek. To interpret such texts, as Petersen seeks to do, as mere expressions of modesty borders on *hineininterpretieren*—reading anything one wishes into a text.

The elementary and summary knowledge that Gregory probably acquired during his school years in Rome was quite insufficient to allow him a personal acquaintance with Greek literature.[9] The education of the period did not provide a full understanding of Greek, let alone the ability to write or speak it. If one wished to obtain a mastery of Greek, then intensive and persistent study was necessary; in particular, if one wished to increase one's command of Greek, a stay in the East allowing special contacts was essential. Such a development can already be observed in the fourth century

in the days of Jerome and Augustine. The latter had struggled over the years to improve his school knowledge of Greek. Through persistent application, he had gradually become quite familiar with the Greek text of the Bible, to the point where he could pass judgment on the variants he encountered in the Greek codices. Yet he was unable or scarcely able, despite such progress, to read Greek Christian writers in their original language.[10] Jerome, on the contrary, who confidently proclaimed himself *uir trilinguis,* lived for a long time in the East, where he made himself so fully a master of Greek that he was able, without much difficulty, to read Greek works.[11] As a Christian he confined himself entirely to Christian writers; after his conversion to the ascetic life his interest in profane authors dwindled. Courcelle is probably right when he says that Jerome sometimes refers to Plato or Demosthenes, but that he knew these writers only through Latin translations.[12] He was one of the rare Romans of the period who could understand spoken Greek—he had followed lectures by Didymus the Blind in Alexandria and had been among those who listened to Gregory of Nazianzen in Constantinople—and he was probably capable of writing Greek.

In the fifth and sixth centuries a Christian writer in the West able to understand a Greek text was indeed rare. We are indebted to the translation skills of Rufinus and Jerome, and later to those of Dionysius Exiguus and the group of translators at Vivarium, for having made available in the West some important works of the Greek Fathers. Thus, for example, Gregory was able to use Latin renderings of the *Apophthegmata*—compilations made by Pelagius and John about 540 and known as the *Vitae patrum*—and an existing translation of the *Historia lausiaca* for his *Dialogues,* which can be viewed as the Western counterpart of these works.

Although Gregory in the course of his studies, in addition to reading the important Christian Latin authors, must also have learned to know several secular writers, such as Virgil, Cicero, and Seneca—the last is cited once without being named—his Greek education must have been of the most limited kind. In commenting on Job 9.9 he launches into an astronomical digression, citing three secular Greek writers whose works contained astronomical data—namely, Hesiod, Aratus, and Callimachus—but we cannot conclude from this that he himself had consulted the texts of these writers.[13] For Gregory this may represent no more than recollection

from some school textbook or the remembrance of a Latin author, like Quintilian, who cites the names together in a single context.[14]

Since Courcelle's investigations we have learned what caution is needed when dealing with such a text from a late Latin author. As the papal representative (apocrisarius) of Pelagius II, Gregory spent six years in Constantinople (579–585). Had he considered it important, it would have been easy for him during this period to have increased his knowledge of Greek considerably. But we are told nothing about any efforts he may have made to master Greek, nor is there any evidence that he did so, although in the course of those years he must have picked up some vocabulary. That he remains, on the whole, so silent about his sojourn in Constantinople sheds light on his general attitude toward the Greek world. The short passage in his dedicatory letter of the *Moralia* to his friend Leander, who also spent some time in Constantinople, stands in isolation.[15] Gregory, who had taken with him many monks from the Roman monastery of St. Andrew, lived there in a Latin-speaking milieu.[16] At this period, knowledge of Latin in the capital of the East Roman Empire was strengthened by the fact that many Roman families had moved to the New Rome during the period of Gothic rule in Italy. For Gregory, Rome far surpassed Constantinople. In a letter to Rusticiana he writes: "And what is the meaning of your great delight in the city of Constantinople, and your forgetfulness of the city of Rome, I know not."[17] The many matters with which he had to deal as apocrisarius could be handled either in Latin or through interpreters. From a letter of 597 to his friend Narses, in which, as pope, he recommends his new apocrisarius, the deacon Anatolius, we can conclude that this position was no sinecure.[18]

Dudden considers it astounding that someone who was repeatedly involved in complicated diplomacy and had to decide delicate problems did not possess the native language: "Was he negligent and careless? Or was he contemptuous—'an old-fashioned Roman,'—disdaining to learn the dialect of the New Rome?"[19] Claude Dagens is inclined to perceive in certain statements of Gregory the consciously haughty attitude of a self-assured Roman. Gregory sometimes expressly says that Greek scarcely interests him (although he had an elementary knowledge of it): "Il insiste lui-même sur cette ignorance, mais d'une façon assez curieuse: jamais il ne la regrette, il aurait plutôt tendance à s'en vanter. Si bien que

l'on peut se poser la question: Grégoire ignorait-il vraiment le grec ou bien voulait-il faire comme s'il l'ignorait, pour mieux manifester sa fierté de Romain?"[20] Thus, in 593, writing from Rome, he declines to answer the letter of a Roman lady, who remained in Constantinople, because she had written to him in Greek: "Domnae Dominicae salutes meas dicite, cui minime respondi, quia cum sit Latina Graece mihi scripsit."[21] In certain letters a polemical note predominates, and his aloofness appears to be politically motivated.

Let us now consecutively examine the various elements in Gregory's works that may help us reach a judgment concerning his knowledge of Greek. To begin with, there are several Greek terms that he translates or explains, or for which he provides etymologies. They do not offer not much help in establishing the level of his competence in Greek. With these one might, for example, compare the instances where Gregory presents the meaning of Hebrew *nomina propria*—scarcely a sufficient basis for judging his independent competence in Hebrew. In this last case, of course, Gregory's source is Christian exegetical literature, in particular, Jerome's *Liber interpretationis hebraicorum nominum*. He is working from secondary data.[22]

Nevertheless, one must principally go hunting in the earlier Latin exegetical literature to find the sources for most of the Greek terms that Gregory uses. They derive mainly from the Bible and are treated by Gregory in an exegetical context. Next come adopted Grecisms, drawn especially from a Christian milieu. Finally, the presence of some Greek medical terms can be explained by Gregory's preoccupation with medical matters as a result of his poor health.[23]

Gregory's elucidation of Greek terms can be shown to derive almost entirely from an already existing tradition. A few examples will help to demonstrate how dependent Gregory is on Latin sources, sources that, as was customary at the period, he hardly ever indicates. In the homilies on Ezekiel, in connection with Ps. 67.14 ("Si dormiatis inter medios cleros"), he remarks: "Cleros Latina lingua sortes dicimus." Here he is giving a translation (*cleros* = *sors*) known to him through the writings of Jerome.[24] This is also the case for terms such as *diplois*,[25] *ecclesiastes*,[26] *holocaustum*,[27] *hypocrita*,[28] and *paraclitus*.[29]

In addition to the traditional rendering of Greek terms, Gregory also presents some instances that involve etymologies. Here we are

also concerned with an exegetical expedient: the etymology is meant to underpin a particular biblical interpretation. And here also one can point to an already existing tradition. Sometimes Gregory may have fallen back on his early education—which included a certain amount of etymologizing—but, on the whole, he is borrowing from the works of Augustine and Jerome. It is possible that the explanations for *Cocytus*,[30] *Hyades*,[31] and *Pleiades*[32] may go back to his schooldays, but the etymology of other terms, such as *platea* (from πλάτος = *latitudo*), *gazophylacium* (a hybrid word found only in translations of the Bible),[33] and *topazium*,[34] he knows, unquestionably, from the Christian tradition. Only in one isolated case has it proved impossible to find the trace of a tradition before the time of Gregory. In *Mor.* 9.16 βασιλεὺς is interpreted as deriving from βάσις λαοῦ *(basis populi).*[35] Yet it is very probable that even here there existed a tradition predating Gregory, since this seems to be not Gregory's ad hoc personal interpretation but one that is also found in the *Etymologicum magnum.* Isidore of Seville, a few decades later, gives this same interpretation, which he may have learned from Gregory or may have borrowed from an earlier tradition.[36]

All this concerns isolated words, where Gregory's remarks tell us more about his general erudition than about the level of his knowledge of Greek. There are, however, some texts where he comments on passages of Greek Christian authors in a manner that might lead one to believe that he himself had consulted these writers. But when one examines these passages more closely, it appears that no Greek original was involved. In *Ep.* 7.31 Gregory cites the Greek church historian Sozomenus when, in fact, he is quoting a remark from the church historian Theodoret of Cyrrhus.[37] The mistake is readily explained through the use of the Latin translation *(Historia tripartita)* that the monk Epiphanius made for Cassiodorus at Vivarium in the first half of the sixth century. In this translation the three Greek church histories of Sozomenus, Theodoret, and Socrates had all been welded together. There is thus no question of Gregory having read these church historians in the original Greek.[38]

In another letter (*Ep.* 7.5) Gregory appeals to a text of Epiphanius, the fourth-century bishop of Salamis in Cyprus. But it is obvious that even in this case he did not have the original Greek of the passage from the *Panarion* (a handbook of heresies) in front of

him.[39] A comparison of texts makes it evident that he knew Epiphanius only through Augustine's use of this author in his compilation on heresies. We reach the same conclusion if we examine *Ep.* 7.31 where, in connection with this same question, Gregory mentions Augustine and Philaster, but not Epiphanius: "In Latina ergo lingua de hoc Eudoxio nunc usque neque in Philastro neque in beato Augustino, qui multa de haeresibus conscripserunt, neque in aliis patribus aliquid inuenimus. Caritas igitur uestra, si quis apud Graecos probatorum patrum de eo sermonem fecit, suis mihi epistulis innotescat."[40]

How little familiarity there was at the time in the West with the most important Greek Christian writers emerges likewise from *Ep.* 8.29, an answer sent by Gregory to Eulogius, patriarch of Alexandria. Here there is mention of excerpts from Basil, Gregory of Nyssa, and Epiphanius: "Virorum quippe fortissimorum Basilii, Gregorii atque Epiphanii testimonia protulistis, et manifeste peremptum cognoscimus eum in quo heroes nostri tot iacula dederunt."[41] The texts cited by Eulogius were not available in Rome. When Gregory cites such Greek excerpts it is because, according to the long-standing custom of the papal chancery—and this applies also to letters written in Greek that arrived from the East—they had been translated into Latin.

It was a sign of the times that good translators had become very scarce. Gregory several times laments the poor quality of the translation of correspondence and official documents. Because of their extreme literalness—most translators made obvious and regular use of *glossaria*—the translations were often unintelligible: "Indicamus praeterea quia grauem hic [at Rome] interpretum difficultatem patimur. Dum enim non sunt, qui sensum de sensu exprimant sed transferre uerborum semper proprietatem uolunt, omnem dictorum sensum confundunt. Unde agitur ut ea quae translata fuerint nisi cum graui labore intellegere nullomodo ualeamus."[42] Pope Leo I was already complaining about the poor quality of translation of Greek correspondence in the papal chancery.[43] We have Gregory's witness that the translation of Latin into Greek at Constantinople was not much better: "hodie in Constantinopolitana ciuitate, qui de Latino in Graeco dictata bene transferant, non sunt. Dum enim uerba custodiunt et sensus minime attendunt, nec uerba intellegi faciunt et sensus frangunt."[44] Such general comments about the situation say

nothing directly about Gregory's knowledge of Greek: he is only speaking about the unintelligible result that often emerges from translation.

That Gregory's official letters sent from Rome to Constantinople were translated from Latin into Greek can be seen from *Ep.* 1.28, addressed to the *antigraphus* (*cancellarius* or *magister scriniorum* [head of the chancery]) responsible for the official imperial correspondence and also for commissioning translations: "Praeterea si prolixam epistulam meam ad interpretandum accipere fortasse contigerit, rogo, non uerbum ex uerbo, sed sensum ex sensu transferte, quia plerumque, dum proprietas uerborum tenditur, sensuum uirtus amittitur."[45] Here also Gregory warns against the practice of too literal translation that risks losing the real meaning.

It is also worth mentioning here the theological discussion about the resurrection of the body that Gregory had with the patriarch Eutychius during his stay in Constantinople. Precisely because subtle theological questions were involved, both men must undoubtedly have used their own language. It is self-evident that interpreters were present at such discussions and conversations, although this is not explicitly brought out in the accounts. According to Eutychius, glorified bodies were not palpable: "quia non, sicut Eutychius Constantinopolitanae urbis episcopus scripsit, corpus nostrum in illa resurrectionis gloria erit impalpabile, uentis aereque subtilius." Gregory presents a lively account of how the discussion progressed: "Qui cum eidem Eutychio in Constantinopolitana urbe positus, hoc euangelicae ueritatis testimonium protulissem [namely, Luke 24.39, "Palpate, et videte: quia spiritus carnem et ossa non habet, sicut me videtis habere"], ait . . . Cui inquam . . . Qui adiungebat etiam, dicens . . . Ad haec ipsa respondi, dicens." Later on both had a meeting, privately, with Emperor Tiberius: "Tunc itaque de hac re in longa contentione perducti, grauissima a nobis coepimus simultatione resilire, cum piae memoriae Tiberius Constantinus imperator secreto me et illum suscipiens, quid inter nos discordiae uersaretur, agnouit."[46]

Gregory further tells us that on a few occasions he consulted Greek manuscripts of the Bible. It is possible that his knowledge of Greek was sufficient to allow him to verify the meaning of a particular word in some passage—this would imply no more than a rather elementary level of knowledge—but it is also possible that he no

more consulted a Greek Bible codex than he read Epiphanius or Theoderet in their own language. In a homily on Ezekiel he not only refers to the text of the Septuagint but also professes to have closely examined the translations of Symmachus, Theodotion, and Aquila: "Translationem autem Septuaginta interpretum, Aquilae, Theodotionis, et Symmachi sollicite perscrutantes, nihil ex his uerbis inuenimus, sed beati Hieronymi scripta relegentes agnouimus quia hanc sententiam in Hebraea ueritate ita positam, non quidem iuxta uerbum, sed iuxta sensum inuenerit."[47] It is difficult to avoid the impression that Gregory is here threading his way through Jerome's commentary on Ezekiel where he specifically mentions the Jewish translators whom he had consulted.[48] Since Gregory endorses Jerome's conclusions, one may suspect that his pretence of having himself verified the text betrays a certain posturing. Gregory also alludes to Greek Bible codices in dealing with Job 39.9: "Rhinoceros iste qui etiam monoceros Graecis exemplaribus nominatur."[49] We do not wish to exclude the possibility, with regard to those texts he seriously commented on (parts of Ezekiel, 1 Kings [=1 Sam.], and Job), that Gregory could have made his own comparisons with the Greek text, but in this particular case there is another possibility: that the reading μονόκερως of the Septuagint was derived from Augustine's citation of Job 39:9 in his comments on Job.[50]

We can likewise ask ourselves whether Gregory was able, on the basis of his own personal knowledge, to pronounce on the superiority of Latin manuscripts of the acts of church councils over Greek codices. In *Ep.* 6.14 he writes to the *comes* Narses:

> Ephesinam autem synodum perscrutantes de Adelfio et Saua et ceteris aliis, qui illic dicuntur esse damnati, omnino nihil inuenimus, et existimamus quia, sicut Chalcedonensis synodus in uno loco ab ecclesia Constantinopolitana falsata est, sic aliquid et in Ephesina synodo factum est. Caritas ergo uestra uetustos omnino codices eiusdem synodi requirat et illic uideat, si quid tale inuenitur, mihique eundem codicem quem inuenerit transmittat, quem, mox legero, retransmitto. Nouis enim codicibus passim non credat. Ex qua re dubius factus sum et nihil adhuc uolui de hac causa praedicto fratri meo Iohanni episcopo rescribere. Romani autem codices multo ueriores sunt quam Graeci, quia nos uestra sicut non acumina, ita nec imposturas habemus.[51]

One should perhaps rather see here one of Gregory's chauvinistic utterances that agrees well with other remarks where he gives vent to a feeling of Roman superiority: he stresses Roman honesty, in contrast to the tricks and the inclination to falsifying with which, as he thinks, the Greeks are afflicted.

Petersen goes so far as to suppose that Gregory the Great had read works of Gregory of Nazianzen in Greek texts that were not available in Latin translations: "There is also the possibility that Gregory the Great may have read some of the books of Gregory of Nazianzus which have not been translated into Latin. There are certain similarities of style and thought which are suggestive. An important field for comparison will be the treatment of *contemplatio* and θεωρία in both writers. There appear to be certain similarities of thought between, for example, *Mor.* 18.92 and *Or.* 28.1–3."[52]

But when the passages she mentions are juxtaposed, one can perceive only a very general agreement between them. Not only is the vocabulary dissimilar, but even the biblical citations that form their points of departure are different (1 Tim. 6.16 and Ps. 38.6 in contrast to Exod. 33.23 and 2 Cor. 12.2). Gregory asks himself how the two texts he quotes should be linked: Ps. 38.6, "accedite ad eum et illuminamini," with 1 Tim. 6.16, "Qui lucem habitat inaccessibilem." How can man be enlightened if he cannot approach the inaccessible light? Gregory finds the solution in a special limited meaning that, according to him, *homo* has in a certain number of scriptural passages, designating *humana sapiens* (someone who relishes things human). We can, even as creatures, see God, though in incomplete fashion, if through our conduct we can lift ourselves above human knowledge. ("Videbimus igitur Deum, si per caelestem conuersationem supra homines esse mereamur. Nec tamen ita uidebimus sicut uidet ipse seipsum. Longe quippe dispariliter uidet creator se, quam uidet creatura creatorem. Nam quantum ad immensitatem Dei, quidam nobis modus figitur contemplationis, quia eo ipso pondere circumscribimur, quo creatura sumus.")[53] Gregory of Nazianzen, on the other hand, writes in a totally different fashion in *Or.* 28 and with a very different wording about the vision of God. Referring to the text of the Bible that states that Moses merely saw the back of God, Gregory of Nazianzen suggests that our vision of God is like seeing the reflection of the sun in water. It is clear that all that remains is a very general similarity: that the human vision

of God is very incomplete. But this thought can be found in several Christian, including Latin, writers. It is therefore very unlikely that Gregory borrowed the idea from a Greek Christian writer.

Petersen likewise believes she has been able to discover a possible stylistic parallel between these authors, one that could indicate that Gregory the Great had read Gregory of Nazianzen's autobiographical poem. In each instance we find the description of a sea storm. Can we see in the description of the storm that overtook Maximianus, later bishop of Syracuse, on his return journey from Constantinople to Rome[54] —a passage rightly perceived to have been influenced by the well-known description of the sea storm in Virgil's *Aeneid* (1.84–123)—reminiscences also of the description of the storm that Gregory of Nazianzen encountered on his journey out of Alexandria? The passages that must be compared are the following:

> Nam cum in eorum morte uentorum nimietatibus eleuati fluctus saeuirent, ex naui claui perditi, arbor abscisa est, uela in undis proiecta, totumque vas navis quassatum nimiis fluctibus ab omni fuerat sua conpage dissolutum. Rimis itaque patentibus intrauit mare . . . Tunc in eadem naui residentes, non iam ex mortis uicinia, sed ex ipsa eius praesentia ac uisione turbati omnes.[55]

> . . . καὶ στάσις τῶν πνευμάτων
> ἔβραζε τὴν ναῦν, καὶ τὰ πάντ᾽ ἦν νὺξ μία,
> γῆ, πόντος, αἰθήρ, οὐρανὸς ζοφούμενος.
> Βρονταὶ δ᾽ ἐπήχουν ἀστραπῶν τινάγμασι.
> Κάλοι δ᾽ ἐρόχθουν ἱστίων πληρουμένων.
> Ἔκλινεν ἱστός, οἰάκων δ᾽ οὐδὲν σθένος.
> Βία γὰρ ἡρπάζοντο χειρὸς αὐχένες.
> Πλῆρες δ᾽ ὑπερτοιχοῦντος ὕδατος σκάφος,
> βοὴ δὲ συμμιγής τε καὶ θρήνων πλέως
> ναυτῶν, κελευστῶν, δεσποτῶν, ἐπιβατῶν
> Χριστὸν καλούντων ἐκ μιᾶς συμφωνίας.
> . . .
> Πάντων δὲ τὸν κοινὸν θάνατον δεδοικότων . . .[56]

In the *Dialogues* there is a description of how the rudder was carried away, the sails were lost, and the water penetrated through the

planks that had been wrenched apart. In the *Carmen* we read that the rudder was put out of commission, the mast was bent, and water poured over the rigging, while the sailors shouted for help. Precisely because we are here often concerned with stereotyped descriptions, such very vague parallels prove nothing. Only a manifest verbal resemblance or an arresting original image would have demonstrative force. But these are completely lacking in this case. Even passages that at first sight might appear to have some relationship to the description in the *Dialogues* turn out in the end to be so different that they cannot have served as models for a Latin text of the sixth century.

Gregory of Nyssa is a second Greek Christian author to whom Petersen believes she can point as someone whose work Gregory the Great had read. She relies here on two texts. First, in *Dial.* 1.7 a miracle is described that shows similarities with a miracle ascribed to Gregory Thaumaturgus, which Gregory the Great used as a model: "duorum patrum uirtutes imitatus est [Nonnosus of Soracte]: in mole scilicet saxi, factum Gregorii qui montem mouit." It is evident that the ultimate source for these facts is the *Life of Gregory Thaumaturgus* by Gregory of Nyssa. But Petersen draws the immediate conclusion that Gregory the Great had read the original Greek biography: "A further indication that Gregory the Great may have been acquainted with the works of Gregory of Nyssa is a reference to an incident described in the latter's *Vita* of Gregory Thaumaturgus in the *Dialogues*."[57] But apart from the fact that there exists no textual agreement between the two passages that could help to indicate a direct borrowing, we can accept that the account most probably reached him through the Latin translation by Rufinus of Eusebius's *Church History*, where the miracle is described, but as an interpolation due to the hand of Rufinus: "inuenta est rupes inportuna secessisse tantum quantum spatii ad condendam quaerebatur ecclesiam."[58]

The second passage to which Petersen appeals is found in one of the Gospel homilies, where the hours for which the workers in the vineyard are being hired are compared to the ages of human life. While the ninth hour indicates *senectus*, the eleventh hour stands for "aetas quae decrepita uel ueterana dicitur": "Unde Graeci ualde seniores non γέροντας sed πρεσβυτέρους appellant, ut plus quam senes esse insinuent quos prouectiores vocant."[59] On this Peter-

sen has the following commentary: "It is difficult to know to what Greeks Gregory is referring here, but it is worth noticing that πρεσβύτερος is used by Gregory of Nyssa to describe persons who are advanced in piety [*Hom. in Ecclesiaten* 1; *PG* 44, 629C–D]. This forms a good parallel with *quod prouectiores vocant.* The *Homiliae in Ecclesiasten,* where the use of πρεσβύτερος occurs, have never been translated into Latin, which suggests that Gregory the Great may have been acquainted with the Greek text."[60] But both texts have much less in common than is here suggested. Apart from the fact that *prouectiores* here does not mean "more advanced in piety" but "of more advanced age" *(aetate prouectiores),* the question in the first place is that of the ages of man; the comparison with the degrees of virtue only comes later. While for Gregory the Great the comparative form πρεσβύτερος indicates the age that comes after γῆρας *(prouectior, ualde senior, plus quam senex),* in Gregory of Nyssa's text the πρεσβύτερος is only compared with the γέρων: ἐν γηρεᾷ καταστάσει γενόμενος (*PG* 44.629D). Apart from showing that Gregory knows some Greek words, including a comparative form, this passage teaches us nothing about his mastery of Greek.[61]

Our conclusion is evident: nothing justifies the contention that Gregory had such a proficiency in reading Greek that he was in a position to read exacting Greek theological writings like those of Gregory of Nyssa, or even simple Greek verses like those of Gregory of Nazianzen. Although we may accept that he had an elementary knowledge of Greek—similar to, but much less than, that of Augustine, for example—and that he knew something of the Greek form of the Bible, none of the evidence examined here provides conclusive proof that Gregory could by himself read a Greek text. To achieve such a proof is also more difficult than many scholars seem to realize. The passages that Petersen draws from the writings of Gregory of Nazianzen and Gregory of Nyssa lack any kind of conclusive force.[62]

NOTES

This essay was originally published as "De kennis van het Grieks bij Gregorius de Grote," in *Noctes Noviomagenses J. C. F. Nuchelmans XIII lustris pr. Kal. Sept. anno Domini MCMLXXXV feliciter peractis rude donato ab amicis oblatae* (Weesp, 1985), 3–18. This English translation

is presented here with the author's approval. Some small modifications—references originally given in the body of the article and now moved to a footnote—have resulted in a new numbering of footnotes.

1. Dudden, *Gregory,* 1:153.

2. H. Steinacker, "Die römische Kirche und die griechischen Sprachkenntnisse des Frühmittelalters," in *Festschrift Th. Gomperz: Dargebracht zum siebzigsten Geburtstage am 29. Marz 1902* (Vienna, 1902; reprint Aalen, 1979), 336–37: "am Hofe Gregors I war ein halbes Jahrhundert später niemand, der sich mit griechischer Sprache abgab."

3. H.-I. Marrou, *Saint Augustin et la fin de la culture antique,* 4th ed. (Paris, 1958), 27–46, especially 45n.4: "Saint Grégoire le Grand qui fut apocrisiaire à Constantinople ne savait pas le grec."

4. Courcelle, *Lettres,* 381n.2: "Il est clair en effet que, si Grégoire attribue par erreur à Sozomène une phrase de Socrate, c'est qu'il les lit, lui qui du reste ignorait le grec, dans la traduction cassiodorienne, *Hist. Trip.* 5.39 où le texte de Socrate est suivi d'un fragment de Sozomène." See also on Gregory, ibid., 390–91. Cf. P. Ewald, *Ep.* 3.63, *MGH, Epistolae,* 1:225n.7: "Gregorium se ipsum linguam Graecam ignorasse saepius contendit; nescio quo iure."

5. Joan Petersen, "Did Gregory the Great Know Greek?" in *The Orthodox Churches and the West,* ed. Derek Baker (Oxford, 1976), 121–34. [Translator's note: Petersen has returned to the subject of Gregory and Greek in some later articles: "Greek Influences upon Gregory the Great's Exegesis of Luke 15.1–10 in *Homelia in Euangelium* II, 34," in *Grégoire le Grand,* Papers of the Chantilly Conference on Gregory of 1982 (Paris, 1986), 521–29; "The Influence of Origen upon Gregory the Great's Exegesis of the Song of Songs," *Studia patristica* 18:1 (1986): 343–47. This last article betrays no awareness that Gregory's indebtedness to Origen had been discussed in *JThS* n.s. 19 (1968): 215–25; and in " 'Homo Omnino Latinus'? The Theological and Cultural Background of Pope Gregory the Great," *Speculum* 62 (1987): 529–51.]

6. *CCSL* 140:487.6–7.

7. Petersen, "Gregory," 127, mistakenly refers to Augustine, *Confessions* 1.13–14, as parallel to a *confessio humilitatis,* where Augustine, writing about reading Homer at school, says, "Nulla verba illa noveram": "But the numerous Greek words scattered through his writings show that this was not literally the case." The text quoted, however, refers only to Augustine's school knowledge. We know that he later perfected his knowledge of Greek, in particular with regard to the Greek of the Bible. It should also be added that a good number of the Greek words he uses are part of the traditional legacy of Latin and that Christian usage also included many Grecisms.

8. *CCSL* 140A:959.18–60.19, 24–25. This text is also cited by John the Deacon in his *Vita* of Gregory the Great (4.81; *PL* 75:228–29): "Siquidem quod Graecam linguam nescierit, ipse testatur in epistola Eusebio, Thessalonicensi episcopo, scribens etc."

9. On Gregory's education, see P. Riché, *Education et culture dans l'Occident barbare,* 2nd ed. (Paris, 1962), 187–94. Dagens, *Grégoire,* 34, notes: "Pierre Riché a bien montré que le jeune préfet de la ville a reçu une solide instruction, qu'il connaît la grammaire et la rhétorique, qu'il s'intéresse aux sciences naturelles et que, s'il ignore la philosophie, il dispose d'une bonne formation juridique." Dudden, *Gregory,* 76, states that the philosophy lessons given in Latin must have included mention of Greek philosophers: "It is possible, of course, that in his schooldays Gregory heard lectures on Marcus Aurelius and Seneca, and was initiated, perhaps, into some of the doctrines of the *Nicomachean Ethics* 5 (see *Mor.* 2.16.28–29)."

10. In addition to the work of Marrou (see above, note 3), see also: O. Rottmanner, "Zur Sprachkenntnis des hl. Augustinus," *Theologische Quartalschrift* 77 (1895): 269–76; E. Angus, *The Sources of the First Ten Books of St. Augustine's* De Civitate Dei (Princeton, 1906), 236–76 (section 3, "Augustine's Knowledge of Greek"); P. Guilloux, "Saint Augustin savait-il le grec?" *RHE* 21 (1925): 79–83; B. Altaner, "Augustinus und die griechische Sprache," in *Pisciculi: Studien zur Religion und Kultur des Altertums, F. J. Dölger zum 60. Geburtstage dargeboten* (Münster, 1939), 19–40; Altaner, "Der Einfluss und das Fortleben der griechischen Literatur im Abendland vom Ende des 4. bis in die zweite Hälfte des 6. Jhts," *TR* 48 (1952): 41–50; L. Finale Montalbano, "Sulla conoscenza del greco di S. Agostino," *Humanitas* 6 (1951): 1095–97; Courcelle, *Lettres,* 137–209. On the decline of Greek in the West see, with respect to the work of Marrou mentioned above, M. R. P. McGuire, "The Decline of the Knowledge of Greek in the West from c. 150 to the Death of Cassiodorus: A Reexamination of the Phenomenon from the Viewpoint of Cultural Assimilation," *Classical Folia* 13 (1959): 3–25. Evidence that Greek had an official place in secular education can be seen, for example, from the *Codex Theodosianus* tit. 3.1.11, concerning the appointment of a teacher at Trier. But judging from the reservation present in the wording ("si quis dignus repperiri potuerit"), there was no certainty that a suitable candidate would be found.

11. Cf. J. N. D. Kelly, *Jerome: His Life, Writings and Controversies* (London, 1975), 13: "Did Jerome's curriculum at this stage include Greek, of which he may have picked up a smattering at Stridon? Years later, when the two were locked in a pamphlet warfare, Rufinus was,

by implication, to deny it: 'Before his conversion [to the ascetic life] he was, like me, completely ignorant of Greek language and literature' ["Ante enim quam conuerteretur, mecum pariter et litteras Graecas et linguam penitus ignorabat"; *Apologia contra Hieronymum* 2.9; *CCSL* 20:91.20–22]."

12. Courcelle, *Lettres,* 47–78.

13. *Mor.* 9.11.12 (*CCSL* 143:464.2–9): "Nequaquam sermo ueritatis uanas Hesiodi, Arati et Callimachi fabulas sequitur, ut Arcturum nominans, extremam stellarum septem caudam Ursae suspicetur, et quasi Orion gladium teneat amator insanus. Haec quippe astrorum nomina a cultoribus sapientiae carnalis inuenta sunt; sed scriptura sacra idcirco eisdem uocabulis utitur ut res quas insinuare appetit notitia usitatae appellationis exprimantur [Scripture sometimes borrows the terminology of secular learning, but all that here concerns these mythological names and stems from pagan mythology must be discarded]." [Translator's note: For the solution to Gregory's handling of the constellations in his commentary on Job, see the translator's appendix that follows this essay. The new evidence presented there, showing the Latin source Gregory used, only further strengthens Bartelink's overall thesis.]

14. Quintilian, *Institutiones oratoriae* 10.1.

15. See *Mor.,* Ad Leandrum 1 (*CCSL* 143:1–2).

16. Ibid. (*CCSL* 143:2.33–38): "multi ex monasterio fratres mei germana uincti caritate secuti sunt . . . Ad illorum quippe consortium uelut ad tutissimi portus sinum . . . fugiebam."

17. *Ep.* 8.22 (of May 598; *CCSL* 140A:541.3–42.5): Et quae tanta sit Constantinopolitanae ciuitatis delectatio quaeue Romanae urbis obliuio, ignoro"

18. *Ep.* 7.27 (*CCSL* 140:485.71–76): "Dilectissimum autem filium meum Anatolium diaconum, quem ad facienda responsa ecclesiae in urbe regia transmisi, peto ut frequenter uestra dulcissima caritas uisitet, et post labores quos in causis saecularibus patitur in uerbo Dei uobiscum requiem inueniat et quasi quodam candido linteo eiusdem laboris terreni sudorem detergat." [Translator's note: This text implies that Gregory's friend, Narses, was almost certainly bilingual and could read and speak Latin. On this question, see the essay by Paul Meyvaert, elsewhere in this volume.]

19. Dudden, *Gregory,* 154.

20. C. Dagens, "Grégoire le Grand et le monde oriental," *Rivista di storia e letteratura religiosa* 17 (1981): 244–45.

21. *Ep.* 3.63 (*CCSL* 140:214.20–22).

22. Here are some examples of explanations of Hebrew words drawn from secondary sources (of a total of about sixty, some recur repeat-

edly): *Hom.Ev.* 2.33.8 (*PL* 76:1244C), "Aaron uero mons fortitudinis . . . interpretatur"; *Mor.* 3.22.44 (*CCSL* 143:143.36–37), "Baldad autem uetustas sola"; *Hom.Ev.* 8.1 (*PL* 76:1104A), "Bethlehem quippe domus panis interpretatur"; *Hom.Ez.* 2.5.2 (*CCSL* 142:276.53), "Hosanna autem Latina lingua 'salua nos' dicitur"; *Hom.Ez.* 1.8.6 (*CCSL* 142: 105.136–37), "Hierusalem pacis uisio interpretatur"; *Mor.* 21.5.9 (*CCSL,* 143A:1071.21–23), "Racha quippe in Hebraeo eloquio uox interiectionis est, quae quidem animum irascentis ostendit, nec tamen plenum uerbum iracundiae exprimit"; *Mor.* 33.26.46 (*CCSL* 143B:1713.6), "Sion quippe speculatio interpretatur."

23. See *Dial.* 1.4.8 (*SC* 260:44.97), *flebotomum;* 3.33.7 (*SC* 260: 396.55), "quam medici molestiam Graecoeloquio syncopin uocant"; 3.35.3 (*SC* 260:406.21), *freneticum;* 4.16.3 (*SC* 265:64.26–28), "ea quam Graeco uocabulo medici paralysin uocant molestia corporali percussa est." See A. de Vogüé (*SC* 260:377n.7), who indicates the following parallel texts: Orosius, *Historiae* 7.15, "morbi quem apoplexiam Graeci uocant"; Gregory of Tours, *Mirac. S. Mart.* 2.18, "quod . . . epilepticum . . . medicorum uocitauit auctoritas"; 2.58, "melancholia id est."

24. The phrase occurs in a passage omitted in Gregory's final revision of the homilies on Ezekiel, but preserved by his notary Paterius, who had access to the original version: see *CCSL* 142:428, *Frag.* 15.3. Gregory's source here is Jerome, *Ep.* 52.5 (*CSEL* 54:421): "si enim κλῆρος Graece 'sors' latine appelatur." See also G. J. M. Bartelink, "Etymologisierung bei Gregor dem Grossen," *Glotta* 62 (1984): 91–105.

25. *Mor.* 9.45.68 (*CCSL* 143:506.12–13): "diploidem quippe duplum uestimentum dicimus." The source here might be Augustine on Ps. 108 ("diplois duplum est pallium"), or Jerome on the same psalm (*Tractatus in librum psalmorum* 108.29 [*CCSL* 78:220.334–35]: "diplois ideo quia duplex est pallium").

26. Rendered as *concionator* in *Dial.* 4.4.1 (*SC* 265:26.3). This was the traditional rendering since Jerome ("graece Ecclesiasten, latine Concionatorem possumus dicere," *Praefatio in libros salomonis; PL* 28:1242A).

27. Rendered five times by Gregory as *totum incensum:* see Augustine's *Enarrationes* on Pss. 64 and 65: "ὅλον enim totum dicitur καῦσις incensio. Holocaustum totum incensum . . . / . . . quid est holocaustum? totum incensum" (*Enar. in Psalm.* 64.4, 65.18; *CCSL* 39:826.37–38, 852.3).

28. *Mor.* 18.7.13 (*CCSL* 143A:893.2–3): "Hypocrita qui latina lingua dicitur simulator." See Augustine's *Enarratio* on Ps. 40: "sunt enim hypocritae simulatores" (*Enar. in Psalm.* 40.8; *CCSL* 38:454.14–15).

29. *Hom.Ev.* 2.30.3 (*PL* 76:1221C): "Nostis plurimi, fratres mei, quod Graeca locutione paraclitus Latina aduocatus dicitur, uel consolator." Already in Augustine we find "consolator . . . uel aduocatus" (*In Iohannis evangelium tractatus* 94.2; *CCSL* 36:562.1). [Translator's note: See also Fulgentius, "Paracletus in latina lingua, non solum aduocatus uerum etiam consolator dicitur"(*Contra Fabianum* frag. 2; *CCSL* 91A:765.6). See also Faustus, "paracletum, id est aduocatum . . . siue etiam consolatorem . . . una Graeci sermonis enuntiatio utrumque significat" (*De spiritu sancto* 1.10; *CSEL* 21:119.5–8).] The following also represent traditional explanations: *angelus* = *nuntius* (*Hom.Ev.* 1.6.5, *PL* 76:1097D; 2.25.3, *PL* 76:1191B; 2.34.8, *PL* 76:1250C); *azymus* = *sine fermento* (*Hom.Ev.* 2.22.8, *PL* 76:1179A); *neophytus* = *initio in sanctae fidei . . . conuersatione plantatus* (*Ep.* 9.219, *CCSL* 140A:787.1117–18); *prophetia* = *prodit occulta* (*Hom.Ez.* 1.1, *CCSL* 142:5.25–26); *throni* = *sedes* (*Hom.Ev.* 2.34.10, *PL* 76:1252A). [Translator's note: The list could be lengthened, with a patristic source indicated in each case: e.g., *Mor.* 7.28.36 (*CCSL* 143:360.116–17), "quos graeci panas, latini incubos uocant" (see Augustine [*De civitate Dei* 15.23; *CCSL* 48:489.16–17], "siluanos et panes quod uulgo incubos uocant"); *Hom.Ev.* 1.20.13 (*PL* 76:1167A), "graece ἔλεος misericordia uocatur" (see Jerome [*Ep.* 106.33; *CSEL* 55:263.17–18], "in graeco scriptum est τὸ ἔλεος αὐτοῦ, id est misericordia eius").]

30. *Mor.* 15.60.71 (*CCSL* 143A:795.1–2), "Graeca lingua cocytus luctus dicitur"; cf. Servius on *Aeneid* 6.132.

31. *Mor.* 9.11.15 (*CCSL* 143:467.105), deriving from ὑετὸς = *imber.* [Translator's note: On *Hyades* and *Pleiades,* see the translator's appendix at the end of this essay.]

32. *Mor.* 29.31.67 (*CCSL* 143B:1481.3), deriving from ἀπὸ τοῦ πλείστου.

33. *Hom.Ez.* 2.6.2 (*CCSL* 142:295.15): "Quia sermone Graeco φυλάττειν seruare dicitur, et gazae lingua Persica diuitiae uocantur." Compare, for example, Jerome, *In Ezechiel* 12.40 (*CCSL* 75:570).

34. *Mor.* 18.52.84 (*CCSL* 143A:947.14–17): "Topazium uero pretiosus lapis est; et quia graeca lingua παν omne dicitur, pro eo quod omni colore resplendet, topazium quasi topantium uocatur." See Venantius Fortunatus, *Vita Martini* 3.516–17 (*PL* 88:406C), "Quidquid amor potuit quo totum gratia fundit / omnicolora decens et in omnibus una topazos."

35. *Mor.* 9.16.25 (*CCSL* 143:475.95–76.99): "Unde et terrae princeps non incongrue graeco eloquio βασιλεὺς dicitur. Λαός enim populus interpretatur; βασιλεὺς igitur βάσις λαοῦ uocatur, quod latina uidelicet lingua basis populi dicitur, quia uidelicet ipse super se populum sustinet."

36. Isidore, *Etymologia* 9.3.18: "Reges autem ob hanc causam apud Graecos βασιλεῖς uocantur, quod tamquam bases populum sustinent. Unde et bases coronas habent."

37. *Ep.* 8.31 (*CCSL* 140:493.36–42): "In historia autem Sozomeni de quodam Eudoxio, qui Constantinopolitanae ecclesiae episcopatum arripuisse dicitur, aliqua narrantur. Sed ipsam quoque historiam sedes apostolica suscipere recusat, quoniam multa mentitur et Theodorum Momsuestiae nimium laudat atque usque ad diem obitus sui magnum doctorem ecclesiae fuisse perhibet." [Translator's note: This passage is interesting in view of Gregory's favorable rating of Theodoret—after his supposed recantation at Chalcedon—in the letter he wrote for Pelagius II. See the essay by Paul Meyvaert, elsewhere in this volume.]

38. Courcelle, *Lettres,* 381n.2.

39. *CCSL* 140:452; Courcelle, *Lettres,* 391: "naturellement, Grégoire le Grand ne connaît Epiphane de Chypre que par le *De haeresibus* d'Augustin qui traduisait un abrégé du Panarion."

40. *CCSL* 140:493.45–50.

41. *Ep.* 8.29, to Eulogius of Alexandria (*CCSL* 140A:552.40–42).

42. *Ep.* 10.21, also to Eulogius (*CCSL* 140A:855.112–16).

43. Leo I, *Ep.* 124 (*PL* 54:1062B): "dum aut imperiti, ut apparet, interpretes, aut maligni, quaedam uos aliter intelligere, quam a me sunt praedicata, fecerunt, non ualentes in Graecum eloquium apte et proprie Latina transferre, cum in rebus subtilibus et difficilibus explicandis, uix sibi etiam in sua lingua disputator quisque sufficiat."

44. *Ep.* 7.27, to Narses (*CCSL* 140:485.60–63). See also John the Deacon, *Vita Gregorii* 2.14 (*PL* 75:93A): "Sola deerat interpretandi bilinguis peritia, et facundissima uirgo Cecropia, quae quondam suae mentis acumina, Varrone caelibatum suum auferente, Latinis tradiderat, imposturarum sibi praestigia, sicut ipse in suis epistolis queritur, uindicabat."

45. *Ep.* 1.28 (*CCSL* 140:36.9–12).

46. For the whole account, see *Mor.* 14.56.72–74 (*CCSL* 143A:743–45). This episode is reproduced in great part in John the Deacon's *Life of Gregory: Vita Gregorii* 1.28–29 (*PL* 75:73–75).

47. *Hom.Ez.* 1.7.23 (*CCSL* 142:99.527–32).

48. See, for example, Jerome, *In Ezechielem prophetam* 1.1.4 (*CCSL* 75:8).

49. *Mor.* 31.15.29 (*CCSL* 143B:1571.74–75).

50. *CSEL* 28:2:618.4.

51. *CCSL* 140:383.29–84.41.

52. Petersen, "Gregory," 113.

53. *Mor.* 18.54.92 (*CCSL* 143A:954–55).

54. *Dial.* 3.36 (*SC* 260:408). J. Rougé, "Tempête et littérature dans quelques textes chrétiens," *Nuovo Didaskaleion* 12 (1962): 55–69, traces biblical influences (the prophet Jonas in a storm at sea, Paul's shipwreck) on the description of some storms at sea by Christian authors.

55. There are possible reminiscences here of Virgil, *Aeneid* 1.84–123. Compare "ex mortis vicina" (*Dial.* 3.36.3; *SC* 260:408.21–22) with "praesentemque . . . mortem" (*Aeneid* 1.91); "ab omni fuerat sua conpage dissolutum" (*Dial.* 3.36.2; *SC* 260:408.16–17) with "laxis laterum compagibus omnes" (*Aeneid* 1.122); "rimis itaque patentibus intrauit mare" (*Dial.* 3.36.3; *SC* 260:408.18) with "accipiunt inimicum imbrem rimisque fatiscunt" (*Aeneid* 1.123); "ex naue claui perditi" (*Dial.* 3.36.2; *SC* 260:408.14–15) with "franguntur remi" (*Aeneid* 1.104). See A. de Vogüé's notes to *Dial.* 3.36 (*SC* 260:409nn.2,3).

56. *Carmen de vita sua; PG* 37:1038.131–41, 162.

57. Petersen, "Gregory," 433n.39a.

58. The interpolation follows on *Hist.* 7.28.2 (see *GCS* 9:2:954. 21–23).

59. *Hom.Ev.* 1.19.2 (*PL* 76:1155B).

60. Petersen, "Gregory," 128.

61. The Greek terms πρεσβύτερος and γέρων do not consistently indicate different phases of life. In Hippocrates γέρων is the one who finds himself in the last (seventh) phase (from fifty-six onward); πρεσβύτερος is someone in the sixth phase (from forty-nine to fifty-six): see *Die Hippokratische Schrift von der Siebenzahl,* ed. W. H. Roscher (Paderborn, 1913), chap. 5. See also Pollucis, *Onomasticon,* ed. Bethe, 84. [Translator's note: In this instance Gregory is almost certainly dependent, not on Gregory of Nyssa, but on Augustine, who makes the same distinction as Gregory does in his *Enarratio* on Ps. 104: "quod omnimodo ad uerbum ita dici posset: erudiret principes eius sicut semetipsum, et seniores eius sapientes faceret: πρεσβυτέρους enim habet, quos dicere solemus seniores, non γέροντας id est senes" (*Enar. in Psalm.* 104.14; *CCSL* 40:1544.8–11).]

62. Petersen, "Gregory," 133–34, is prepared to exclude some more direct borrowings by Gregory from the Greek: "It will also be interesting to see whether Gregory the Great was influenced by Basil, by the *Homilies* of John Chrysostom, and by Evagrius Ponticus. Latin translations of some of Basil's works and some of the *Homilies* were available, and Evagrius could have influenced him either directly or through Cassian."

PAUL MEYVAERT

TRANSLATOR'S APPENDIX: GREGORY THE GREAT AND ASTRONOMY

Tracing Gregory's sources can be a difficult matter. The names of heretics and other writers of whom he disapproved appear more frequently than those of the Church Fathers whom he held in great esteem. He does not explicitly quote or allude to Augustine, Jerome, or Cassian, with whose works he was nevertheless very familiar and whose opinions often inspired his own explanation of a particular scriptural passage. The hunt for Gregory's sources thus becomes a fascinating search, demanding an attention to vocabulary, turns of phrase, or ideas that may provide a clue to the particular work he consulted in the course of composing his scriptural commentaries.

Gregory's treatment of the stars mentioned in the Book of Job can serve as an illustration of the kind of research this may entail. Two verses from Job are involved: 9.10, "[Deus] Qui facit Arcturum, et Orionas, et Hyadas et interiora Austri"; and 38.31, "numquid coniungere ualebis micantes stellas Pleiades, aut gyrum Arcturi poteris dissipare." A modern reader, with a smattering of astronomy, can ignore the mythology and concentrate on the stars or constellations named in these verses. But to a reader like Gregory the very names must have reeked of an abhorred and despised pagan mythology. When one recalls the two devotional paintings, of his father and his mother, which Gregory caused to be placed in his paternal home—paintings clearly intended to underline their deeply Christian attitudes—one must wonder how much of the traditional pagan mythology Gregory could have been allowed to absorb during his early years.[1] Yet once he had decided to write a spiritual and allegorical commentary on the Book of Job, Gregory had a need to confront these verses. As he himself explains: "Cum uero quae narrentur astra perpendimus, restat ut ex eorum motibus ad spiritalis intelligentiae arcana surgamus" (*Mor.* 9.11.12; *CCSL* 143:465). Some information about the constellations was a necessary prerequisite to any allegorical commentary.

It would be natural to assume that Gregory began by searching to see whether some earlier patristic writer had commented on these verses of Job, or at least on the stars mentioned there. Now it happens that the prophet Amos also alludes to Arcturus and Orion (Amos 5:8, "facientem Arcturum et Orionem") and that Jerome had written a commentary on this prophet. Gregory obviously consulted this commentary and found there an idea that he chose to make his own: why are pagan mythological names used in Holy Scripture? The passages are worth placing together:

> Haec quippe astrorum nomina a cultoribus sapientiae carnalis inuenta sunt; sed scriptura sacra idcirco eisdem uocabulis utitur ut res quas insinuare appetit notitia usitatae appellationis exprimantur. *Nam si astra quae uellet per ignota nobis nomina diceret, homo pro quo haec eadem scriptura facta est, nesciret procul dubio quid audiret.* Sic igitur in sacro eloquio sapientes Dei sermonem trahunt a sapientibus saeculi. (Gregory, *Mor.* 9.11.12; *CCSL* 143:464)

> Quando autem audimus Arcturum et Oriona, non debemus sequi fabulas poetarum, et ridicula ac portentosa mendacia, quibus etiam coelum infamare conantur, et mercedem stupri inter sidera collocare . . . Sed scire Hebraea nomina, quae apud eos aliter appellantur, vocabulis fabularum gentilium in linguam nostram esse translata, *qui non possumus intelligere quod dicitur, nisi per ea vocabula quae usu didicimus et errore combibimus.* (Jerome, *Comm. in Amos* 2.5; *PL* 25:1042A)

Gregory begins his exposition of Job with a derogatory reference to Hesiod, Aratus, and Callimachus: "Nequaquam sermo ueritatis uanas Hesiodo, Arati et Callimachi fabulas sequitur." Has he merely substituted names for Jerome's general reference to the "fabulae poetarum" with their "ridicula et portentosa mendacia"? In his essay Bartelink wondered whether the names might represent a reminiscence of a chapter of Quintilian that Gregory had read during his school years, for in book 10 (chapter 1) of the *Institutio oratoria* there is a discussion of the merits of a good number of poets, and among the names we encounter those of Aratus, Hesiod, and Callimachus. But unless Gregory was directly familiar with the

works of these poets, there is nothing in this chapter of Quintilian that would cause him to associate these names with astronomy and, in particular, with the constellations mentioned in Job.[2] Yet it is this connection that Gregory appears to have in mind, and it is therefore in this direction that we must search. In fact, the names will provide us with a clue to the next source Gregory consulted to learn more about these stars or constellations, and which provided him with the springboard he needed for his spiritual commentary.

"What the Middle Ages knew of Greek astronomy they knew mainly through the Latin *Aratea*."[3] The *Phaenomena* of Aratus of Soli were translated several times into Latin: by Varro of Atax, by Cicero, by Germanicus Caesar, and by Avienus. The transmission that concerns us here is that of Germanicus or, to be more precise, the scholia that became attached, as a kind of commentary, to his translation, but which may well have had an independent origin. Three sets of scholia are known and have been published, although no satisfactory study of their contents is yet available. The *Scholia Basileensia*, named after Basle, MS A.N. IV.18, have been recognized to date from at least the third century, since Lactantius seems to have known them.[4] The *Scholia Sangermanensia* are found in Paris, Bib Nat. MS lat. 12957, a ninth-century manuscript that once belonged to St. Germain-des-Prés. There are links between these last scholia and the *Scholia Strozziana*, called after Florence, Bib. Laur., MS Strozzianus 46, a fourteenth-century manuscript that once belonged to Collucio Salutati.[5] The main channel for the transmission of the *Scholia Strozziana* is a south Italian florilegium that has come down to us in three manuscripts, the earliest of which is Cava 3, a Beneventan manuscript of the late eleventh century.[6] This, however, tells us nothing about the original date of these particular scholia. They were obviously known in some form to Gregory the Great, as we shall see, and also to Isidore of Seville, who used them for the section on the names of the stars in book 3 of his *Etymologies*.

When we determine what authorities the *Scholia Strozziana* cite in dealing with the stars or constellations mentioned in Job, we find that Hesiod, Callimachus, and Aratus are all mentioned. Here, therefore, is the clue we were seeking. There is, moreover, a remarkable verbal coincidence between some phrases of Gregory and certain passages of these scholia. The agreement is best brought out by linking whatever information Gregory provides for each of the names.

Orion

Gregory, *Mor.* 9.11.12,14 (*CCSL* 143:464–66): *Oriones* quippe in ipso pondere *temporis hiemalis oriuntur*, suoque ortu *tempestates* excitant et *maria terrasque perturbant* . . . et quasi Orion *gladium* teneat *amator* [*armator*?] insanus.

Scholia (ed. Breysig, 162–63): Orion ab urina, id est ab inundatione aquarum. *tempore enim hiemis habet ortum, mare et terras* aquis et *tempestatibus turbat.* hunc Latini iugulam uocant, quod sit armatus *armator* [*armator* is the reading of M and S] *ut gladius* . . . hunc *Hesiodus* dicit Neptuni et Euryales filium etc . . . [ibid., 170] sub Orione lepus constutus est. hic dicitur Orionis canem fugere venantis . . . *Callimachum* quoque accusatur, quod cum Dianae scriberet laudes, [dicit] eum leporino sanguine gaudere.

Isidore, *Etym.* 3.71.10: [D]ictus *Orion* ab urina, id est ab inundatione aquarum. *Tempore enim hiemis obortus mare* et terras aquis ac *tempestatibus turbat.* Hunc Latini Iugulam uocant, quod sit *armatus, ut gladius.*

The text of Isidore is worth quoting to show its closeness to the scholia—a point that will prove useful further on—and also to help underline the verbal agreement between *amator* [*armator*?] of Gregory and *armator* of the scholia, for this is the reading of both manuscripts M and S of the south Italian florilegium.

Hyades

Gregory, *Mor.* 9.11.15 (*CCSL* 143:466–67): Hyadas . . . *iuuenescente uerno* ad caeli faciem prodeunt, et cum sol iam caloris sui uires exerit ostenduntur. Illius quippe *signi* initiis inhaerent quod sapientes saeculi *Taurum* uocant, ex quo augeri sol incipit atque ad extentenda diei spatia feruentior exsurgit . . . *Graeco quippe eloquio* ὑετὸς *pluuia uocatur*, et Hyades nomen a pluuiis acceperunt quia *ortae* procul dubio *imbres ferunt* . . . *Nonnulli uero a graeca littera quae Y dicitur Hyadas nuncupatas arbitrantur* . . . Sed quamuis Hyades ad eiusdem litterae uisione non discrepent, certum tamen est quia ὑετὸς *imber dicitur*, et ortae pluuias apportant.

Scholia (ed. Breysig, 136): [I]n *signo* autem *Tauri* frons et facies Hyades uocantur, quas Pherecydes Athenaeus nutrices Liberi dicit, quae Dodonides nymphae uocantur. quae cum a Lycurgo captiuitatem timentes fugerent Thebas, subito, ne a Iunone aliquid paterentur, Iouis caelo inlatas sideribus honorauit *Hyadasque* appelauit, quod nascente Libero eas inuenerit. temporis signum posuit, uel *quod sint pluuiales*, ὕειν *enim pluere est*, quia earum *ortus imbres concitat, uel quia in modum Y litterae positae sunt.*

Isidore, *Etym.* 3.71.12: Hyades dictae ἀπὸ τοῦ ὕειν, id est a suco et pluuiis. Nam *pluuiae Graece* ὑετός *dicitur.* Ortu quippe suo efficiunt pluuias. Unde et eas Latini suculas appellauerunt, quia quando nascuntur, pluuiarum signa monstrantur . . . Sunt autem septem *in fronte Tauri, et oriuntur tempore uernali.*

The *Scholia Strozziana*—namely, those of the south Italian florilegium—are the only ones that present the alternative explanation for Hyades based on the letter *Y*, which Gregory likewise has.

Pleiades

Gregory, *Mor.* 29.31.67–68, 73 (CCSL 143B:1481): *Pleiades stellae* ἀπὸ τοῦ πλείστου, *id est a pluralitate uocatae sunt.* Ita autem uicinae sibi et diuisae sunt conditae, ut et simul sint; et tamen coniungi nequaquam possint, quatenus uicinitate quidem coniunctae sint, sed tactu disiunctae . . . quia Pleiades coniungere non ualet, quas uicinas sibimetipsis conditas et paene coniunctas uidet . . . Quid enim micantes Pleiades, quae et *septem* sunt, aliud quam sanctos omnes denuntiant . . . *Mor.* 29.32.73 (*CCSL* 143B:1485): Pleiades quippe ab oriente [surgunt].

Scholia (ed. Breysig, 149): Quas *Graeci a pluralitate Pliades uocant,* Latini ab eo, quod uere exoriantur, Vergilias uocant. dicit autem Pherecydes Athenaeus septem sorores fuisse, Lycurgi filias ex Naxo et pro eo, quod Liberum educauerint, a Ioue inter sidera sunt relatae. harum nomina putantur Electra, Alcyone . . . quarum *septima*, ut ait *Aratus*, uix intueri potest, quam quidam prae timore *Orionis* fugisse putant.

Isidore, *Etym.* 3.71.13: *Pliades a pluralitate dictae, quia pluralitatem Graeci* ἀπὸ τοῦ πλεῖστου *appellant.* Sunt autem stellae *septem* ante genua Tauri; ex quibus sex uidentur, nam latet una. Has Latini vergilias dicunt a temporis significatione, quod est uer, quando exoriuntur.

One may suspect that the Greek words recorded by Gregory and Isidore came to be accidentally omitted in the text transmitted by the florilegium. On the other hand, Gregory's comments on the positions occupied by the stars that form this constellation, and his interpretation of their meaning to designate all the saints, leave one wondering whether he was not consulting an illustrated copy of the *Aratea,* like the one transmitted in the florilegium. There the illustration for the Pleiades shows the seven sisters haloed, like Bootis Virgo and some other figures, and arranged in two tiers, four above and three below. If one were unaware of the context one might easily believe them to be seven saints, since by Gregory's day the round halo was already well established as a feature of Christian art.[7]

Arcturus

Gregory, *Mor.* 9.11.12 (*CCSL* 143:464): Nequaquam sermo ueritatis uanas *Hesiodi, Arati* et *Callimachi* fabulas sequitur, ut *Arcturum* nominans, *extremam stellarum septem caudam Vrsae* suspicetur . . . *Mor.* 9.11.13 (*CCSL* 143:465): Quid namque Arcturi nomine qui, in caeli axe constitutus, septem stellarum radiis fulget, nisi Ecclesia uniuersalis exprimitur . . . Pensandum quoque est quod *Arcturus semper uersatur et numquam mergitur* . . . *Mor.* 29.31.67 (*CCSL* 143B:1481): Arcturus uero ita nocturna tempora illustrat, ut *in caeli axe positus* per diuersa se uertat, *nec tamen occidat.* Neque enim extra currens uoluitur, sed in loco situs, in cunctis mundi partibus nequaquam casurus inclinatur . . . *Mor.* 29.31.72 (*CCSL* 143B:1484–85): Est in Arcturo quod consideratius possimus intueri. In *septem quippe stellis uoluitur* et modo quidem tres ad summa eleuat, atque ad ima quattuor inclinat, modo quattuor superius erigit, et tres inferius premit . . . Arcturus uero ex parte aquilonis surgit.

Scholia (ed. Breysig, 111–15): *Vertices extremos*, circa quos sphaera caeli uoluitur, *polos* Graeci nuncupauerunt. e quibus unus est australis, qui terrae obiectu a nobis numquam uidetur, alter *septentrionalis*, qui boreus uocatur et *numquam occidit*, *duos habens arcturos*, quorum maiorem uocant Helicen, *minorem canis caudam*. alterutra quidem horum capita deorsum, alterutra sursum aspiciunt . . .

Helicen [arcturus maior] autem dicit *Hesiodus* Callisto Lycaonis regis filiam fuisse, quae in Arcadia solita cum Diana uenari et in montibus uagari et ab ioue oppressa . . . Iuppiter autem utrosque in caeli astris intulit *ursamque* eam nominauit . . .

Porro *arcturus minor* qui a pluribus Phoenice, a Graecis arctophylax, a nonnullis *canis cauda uocatur* . . . *Aratus* Cynosuran et Helicen Cretensis Iouis nutrices fuisse dicit, ob quod sunt caelesti donatae honore. *habet autem stellas* in humero splendidam I, in pectore claram I, in spina claram I, in uentre claram I, super caudam claras III, *fiunt omnes* VII.

Isidore, *Etym.* 3.71.6–9: Signorum primus Arcton, qui *in axe fixus septem stellis in se reuolutis rotatur*. Nomen est Graecum, quod Latine dicitur *ursa*, quae quia in modum plaustri *uertitur*, nostri eam Septentrionem dixerunt . . . *Septentriones autem non occidere axis uicinitas facit*, quia in eo sunt. Arctophylax dictus, quod Arcton, id est Helicem Ursam, sequitur. Eundem et Booten dixerunt, eo quod plaustro haeret: signum multis spectabile stellis, inter quas *Arcturus* est. *Arcturus sidus est post caudam maioris ursae posita* in signo Bootae. Unde Arcturus dictus est, quasi ἄρκτου οὐρὰ, quia Bootis praecordiis conlocata est. Oritur autem autumnali tempore.

The traditions about Arcturus are very complex and difficult to untangle, and one can imagine some impatience on Gregory's part to find elements that would prove useful to him. While the scholia allude to a major and a minor Arcturus, bringing in the name *Ursus* for one and *canis cauda* for the other, there is no direct allusion to an *Ursae cauda.* Here both Gregory and Isidore agree, though not completely, for while Gregory writes, "Arcturum nominans, extremam stellarum septem caudae Vrsae suspicetur," Isidore states, "Arcturus sidus est post caudam maioris ursae posita."

A fuller investigation is obviously needed into the particular tradition connected with Arcturus, as is a careful analysis of Isidore's source, or sources.

Despite his abhorrence for the stories woven by Hesiod, Aratus, and Callimachus that he had encountered, Gregory found, in the source he consulted on the constellations in Job, neutral elements sufficient in number to allow him to develop a spiritual message that would put these stars on a different plane, one more worthy, he believed, of Holy Scripture. Arcturus became the image of the *solidata ecclesia,* Orion stood for the strength God gave the Church's martyrs in time of persecution, the Hyades celebrated the great teachers given to God's Church in its time of peace, while the Pleiades represented all the saints, namely the faithful of Old and New Testament times, who—though separated in place and time—shared in the same knowledge and love of God.[8]

NOTES

1. See below, note 7.

2. Of the three, Callimachus comes off best in the hands of Quintilian, being regarded as the most outstanding of the elegiac poets (*Institutio oratoria* 10.1.58). Of Aratus, Quintilian declares that the subject he has chosen [stars!] "is lifeless and monotonous, affording no scope for pathos, description of character and eloquent speeches" (10.1.55). Hesiod, on the other hand, "rarely rises to any height, while a great part of his works is filled almost entirely with names" (10.1.52).

3. Quoted by M. D. Reeve, "Aratea," in *Texts and Transmission: A Survey of the Latin Classics,* ed. L. D. Reynolds (Oxford, 1983), 18. See also Reeve, "Some Astronomical Manuscripts," *Classical Quarterly* 30 (1980): 508–22.

4. Reeve, "Aratea," 23.

5. The citations of the *Scholia Strozziana* given below are from the edition of Alfred Breysig, *Germanici Caesaris Aratea cum scholiis* (Berlin, 1867; reprint, Hildesheim, 1967).

6. For a discussion of this south Italian florilegium and the links among its three manuscripts—Cava 3; Madrid, B.N. lat. 19 (former A. 16); and Paris, B.N. lat 7418—see Elizabeth Susan Lott, "The Florilegium of Cava 3, Madrid 19 and Paris 7418" (diss., Harvard Univer-

sity, 1980), especially chap. 2, "The *Aratea* of Germanicus Caesar." The source of the *Scholia Strozziana,* Florence, Bib. Laur., MS Strozzianus 46 (S of Breysig), was almost certainly copied from the now missing portion of Paris, B.N. lat. 7418. Although Cava 3 now lacks the *Aratea* of Germanicus, there are good reasons for thinking the work was originally present in this manuscript. One might ask whether the so-called Sicilian fragment—also containing the *Aratea* with the *Scholia Strozziana*—does have links to Cava 3. We know enough about the pillaging of monastic libraries at the period to wonder whether the "fragmentum . . . noviter repertum in Sicilia," whose discovery is credited to Poggio Braciollini around 1429, was not a cover story for the disappearance of the *Aratea* from Cava 3. Poggio's zeal in obtaining new texts, through means fair and foul, is well known. Cava 3 and Paris 7418 are both Italian manuscripts. Madrid 19 (M, not known to Breysig) was copied from an exemplar in Beneventan script, and thus also has an Italian origin.

7. The illustration of the Pleiades, showing seven round-haloed sisters in two tiers, is found in Madrid 19, fol. 62r. In Gregory's time the square halo represented a person still living; this explains why this feature was present in the portrait of himself that Gregory caused to be placed in his own monastery. In his *Life of Gregory* (4.83–84; *PL* 75:229B–31B) John the Deacon gives a full description of the portraits, those of the parents which Gregory had commissioned, and of Gregory himself, which were still visible in the ninth century.

8. See Gregory's summing up, *Mor.* 9.11.17 (*CCSL* 143:469): "Valde itaque mirum est quod missis apostolis, Dominus caelos tetendit; quod temperatis persecutionum tumoribus, maris fluctus gradiens repressit; quod solidata Ecclesia, Arcturum statuit; quod roboratis contra aduersa martyribus, Orionas misit; quod repletis in tranquillitate doctoribus, Hyadas praebuit." Also *Mor.* 29.31.68–70 (*CCSL* 143B:1482–83): "Stellae enim Pleiades . . . uicinitate sibi coniunctae sunt, tactu disiunctae. Simul quidem sitae sunt, et tamen lucis suae uiritim radios fundunt. Ita sancti omnes aliis atque aliis ad praedicandum temporibus apparentes, et disiuncti sunt per uisionem suae imaginis, et coniuncti per intentionem mentis. Simul micant quia unum praedicant, sed non semetipsos tangunt, quia in diuersis temporibus partiuntur . . . de Deo concorditer sentiunt."

8

BERNARD MCGINN

Contemplation in Gregory the Great

The ancient tradition of contemplation, with its roots deep in the soil of Greek religious philosophy and its rich development in Christian antiquity, found a notable exponent in Gregory the Great. The pope wrote no treatise on contemplation; he scarcely needed to, since the theme is present throughout his works.[1] There is no question that his thoughts on contemplation were much influenced by his predecessors, notably Augustine and Cassian, but Gregory's treatment is in many ways richer and more complete than that of those who went before him, though not presented in a systematic style that would be foreign to his thought. The main lines of his understanding of the nature of contemplation can only be understood by seeing how the pope viewed the history of salvation as essentially a history of contemplation.

Contemplation and the History of Salvation

"The human person was created to contemplate the Creator so that he might always seek his beauty and dwell in the solemnity of his love."[2] Gregory anchored his teaching on contemplation in the Christian story of creation, fall, and redemption in a more decisive way than those who went before him.[3] For Gregory, Adam was first and foremost a contemplative, and one who enjoyed continuous interior loving sight of God, because he had been given *ingenita standi soliditas,* or "inborn firmness of station" (*Mor.* 8.10.19).[4] The Fall, then, first and foremost, was the loss of the ability to contemplate as a consequence of Adam's turning to the exteriority of sin. "By sinning he was poured outside himself and was no longer able to see the joys of the celestial homeland that he had previ-

ously contemplated,"[5] as Gregory put it in the preface to book 4 of the *Dialogues,* one of his most succinct summaries of salvation history as the history of the stages of contemplation. We are born in the position of children of a mother who has been imprisoned, never having seen the light of day ourselves and only hearing about it from her who can remember it. Bereft of Adam's original *ingenita standi soliditas,* we labor in the toils of *lubrica mutabilitas,* the "slippery changeableness" (*Mor.* 8.10.19) of the sinful world.[6]

Hence, Gregory's answer to the question posed by his successor Anselm of Canterbury—"cur Deus homo?"—can be expressed in terms of God's loving desire to restore, if only in part, Adam's contemplative vision to humanity. As he goes on to say toward the conclusion of the preface to *Dial.* 4:

> And for this reason the very Creator of visible and invisible things, the Only-Begotten of the Father, came to redeem the human race and to send the Holy Spirit to our hearts so that, given life by him, we might believe things of which we had still no knowledge through experience [experimento] . . . Anyone who is still not firm in this belief without doubt ought to put faith in what our predecessors say, believing them already to have experience through the Holy Spirit of things we cannot see.[7]

Christ himself, the God-man, possessed perfect *soliditas standi* (see, e.g., *Mor.* 3.16.30), but this gift is not restored to his followers through the grace of redemption. What they do gain is what Gregory calls *soliditas caritatis* (see, e.g., *Hom.Ez.* 2.5.22), the firm bond of love found in the Church.[8] Therefore, whatever contemplative experience (*experimentum* is Gregory's usual term, though *experientia* appears in the *Commentary on 1 Kings [=1 Sam.]*) is granted to believers in this life will be less than Adam's—a partial, imperfect, but still precious restoration to what was once enjoyed in Paradise. An important passage in book 8 of the *Moralia* is especially revealing here. Commenting on Job 7.19 ("How long will you not spare me, nor let me alone so that I can swallow my spittle?"), Gregory understands spittle as "the savor of intimate contemplation [sapor intimae contemplationis]," which flows down from God, the head, to the mouth, which is identified with "the taste of revelation [gustus revelationis]." Spittle calls to mind Christ's mixing of

spit and clay to heal the man born blind (John 9.6). Blind since the expulsion from Paradise, humanity has its contemplative sight restored by the anointing of the Redeemer's spittle, but the sacred spit cannot be fully swallowed into the stomach or mind *(mens)* as long as we remain in this life. "This spit flows into the mouth but it is not swallowed so as to reach the stomach, because the contemplation of divinity touches the understanding [sensus] but does not fully refresh the mind in that the soul is not able to behold what it still sees with a hasty glance [raptim] due to the interference of the dark mist of corruption."[9] The story of contemplation, then, is told in four chapters, that is, the four ages of the Pauline view of history: before the Fall in full but not final fashion, after the Fall not at all, and under grace as a partial foretaste of the final and full contemplation of heaven.

The Nature of Contemplation

What is contemplation for Gregory? Naturally, we should not expect any systematic definition or scholastic division of kinds of contemplation, though the pope was willing to provide brief descriptive definitions, at least of the contemplative life.[10] Those who have tried to categorize Gregory's references to *contemplatio* have found wide variety, including some uses that do not pertain directly to God.[11] David Hurst, in his translation of the *Forty Gospel Homilies,* says that *contemplatio* can be best rendered as "attentive regard," a felicitous suggestion.[12] Contemplation in the proper sense, then, may be broadly understood as "attentive regard for God alone." Though the primary sensory analogy invoked is that of vision or sight, "regard" also allows for a notion of "respectful listening" that helps us to do justice to the many auditory images that the pope employs for describing our most intimate relation to God.[13]

Contemplative vision, as we have seen, is that for which humanity was created: "The vision of God alone is our mind's true repast."[14] If contemplation is our one goal, it is also an impossible attainment in this life, given the divine incomprehensibility. Too much stress on Gregory as a "mystic of light" can slight the powerful, though unsystematic, negative theology that underlies his thought.[15] The pope's sense of the overwhelming divine majesty,

not any developed apophatic theory, is what leads him to insist, over and over again, that God alone *really* contemplates himself, that our limited spirit is incapable of grasping the Unlimited Spirit *(incircumscriptus spiritus)*,[16] that his Unlimited Light is too much for us,[17] and that therefore we can say nothing that is worthy of him.[18] Although Gregory stays far from any form of metaphysical speculation on the hiddenness of God, the measured gravity of the passages where he explores how the divine reality encompasses and yet transcends the world are among the more noble expressions of divine transcendence in medieval theology.[19]

A full treatment of the pope's teaching on contemplation cannot be given here.[20] Gregory's thoughts on the preparation for contemplation, its various stages, and especially the relation of love and knowledge in contemplation are some of the issues that will not be taken up in this essay. But we cannot neglect the question of how Gregory viewed the actual experience of contemplative vision of God. It was in this area that the pope made some of his most notable contributions to the Western mystical tradition, since he spoke of the experiential aspects of mystical contemplation more often and in more detail than his precedessors had done. Although his discussions are not generally autobiographical, we have no reason to doubt that Gregory was speaking out of his own experience.[21]

Gregory's vocabulary is dense and undifferentiated. Love, desire, seeking, knowledge, vision, contemplation: all imply each other and are often used almost interchangeably.[22] The pope's emphasis on the interiority of the experience led him to frequent qualification of the terms associated with contemplation—*contemplatio, quies, visio, lux*—by the adjectives *intimus* and *internus.*[23] The same imperative fostered his preference for expressions of secrecy, such as *secretum contemplationis* (*Mor.* 5.6.9 and 6.37.56; *Reg.* 5.179), and *secretum silentii* (*Mor.* 30.16.54). We can also note his striking metaphors of contemplation not only as a sleep, but as a tomb: "Divine contemplation is a kind of sepulcher of the mind in which the soul is hidden."[24] The hidden reality of contemplation can be suggested through images of height and ascension to mysterious upper reaches. Thus, contemplation is Jacob's ladder (e.g., *Mor.* 5.31.54; cf. 5.34.62) or the mountain that Moses ascended (e.g., *Mor.* 5.36.66; cf. 6.37.58). The expression *culmen contemplationis,* the "high point of contemplation," and its equivalents are

frequent.[25] In the midst of this wealth of images and intermingling of terms, one needs to be particularly attentive to the details of the saint's exposition itself to grasp the core of his thought. Hence, I will examine three representative passages, two from the *Moralia* and one from the *Homilies on Ezekiel,* to try to provide a taste of what only a more detailed literary and theological analysis of many passages could really demonstrate.

The first text is *Mor.* 23.21.40–43, commenting on Job 33.16 ("Then he opened the ears of men and instructed them by discipline"). The first two sections of this comment (40–41) discuss the four modes of compunction, a key theme in the pope's spiritual teaching. The fourth mode, that concerning the piercing *(com-pungere)* we experience when considering "where we are not [ubi non est]," or the rest of heaven, leads to a series of scriptural quotations closing with Ps. 31.22, "I have said in my fear, I have been cast forth from the sight of your eyes." Gregory then takes the opportunity to reflect on this "casting forth" of David, continuing:

> Being raised up in ecstasy,[26] which our interpreters improperly call "fear," he sees he is cast forth from the sight of God's eyes. After a vision of internal light which shone out in his soul through the grace of contemplation by a ray of brightness, he returned to himself. With the knowledge he had received, he discerned both the good things of heaven that he lacked and the bad things of earth that were at hand . . . Raised on high, he saw what he lamented he could not behold when he fell back to himself [relapsus].[27]

Gregory notes the positive side of the relapse experience (32.21.42). The compunction *(ubi non est)* that accompanies the relapse is what enables the soul to begin to strip away the images of this world that impede it from its ascent to God. Rejecting "the imagination of a limited vision . . . the soul tries to gather itself together so that it may prevail by love's great power to contemplate that Being is one and incorporeal."[28] The final section of the comment (23.21.43) represents a lengthy meditation on the oscillation between the "unaccustomed sweetness of internal savor [inusitatem dulcedinem interni saporis]," an Augustinian reference (cf. *Confessions* 10.40.65), and the "downward journey . . . to our familiar darkness [deorsum ire . . . ad familiares tenebras]." Although the

language is Augustinian, Gregory differs from Augustine on what we might call the practical level by drawing out the value of this oscillation as a "struggle" *(certamen)* and "discipline" *(disciplina),* terms that in the light of his constant teaching emphasize the necessity for continuing ascetic effort toward the endless possession of the divine vision.

The second text, the comment on Job 33.26b ("He will see his face in jubilation") in *Mor.* 14.6.10–12, emphasizes the joyful and ineffable nature of mystical consciousness without forgetting the needed cleansing that prepares for this and the limitations it always encounters. God draws us on *(afficit)* and gladdens us *(exhilarat)* by making himself known to us. This gladdening is nothing other than the *compunctio amoris,* whose ineffability Gregory is anxious to draw out. "It is called the 'shout of jubilation' [iubilum] when an inexpressible joy is conceived in the mind that can neither be hidden nor exposed in words: it is exposed by certain kinds of movements although it is not expressed in any proper ways."[29] The *iubilum* (which in the thirteenth century was to become a technical term for mystical experience among the Beguines) is known in the mind or intellect *(mens, intellectus).* "Through it we know [sentitur] what is beyond knowing, and since the consciousness [conscientia] of the one knowing is scarcely adequate to contemplate it, how could the speaker's tongue suffice to express it?"[30] (Here Gregory shifts from terms that invoke specifically "intellectual" powers *[mens, intellectus]* to broader terms, such as the verb *sentire,* which can mean either "to feel" or "to know or perceive" in a general way. He also uses the noun *conscientia,* which I might suggest is something like Augustine's notion of *memoria*—that is, the ground of the soul prior to the discrimination of powers of knowing and of loving.)

Gregory goes on to remind the reader that the fire of tribulation is needed to cleanse the mind before, with the "rust of vices" cleaned away, "it is suddenly illuminated by the bright coruscations of unbounded Light" (24.6.11). This experience, which is one of light, of security, of renovation ("infusione superni roris"), is, however, also an experience of paradox, though here one might say that Gregory stresses the intellectual meaning of mystical paradox rather than its existential effect. "The closer it approaches the Truth the more it knows it is far from it, because had it not beheld

it at least in some way, it would never have realized that it could not behold it."[31] The final section of the comment returns to Gregory's well-known insistence, following Augustine, on the experience of *relapsus* or *reverberatio,* the "beating back" always encountered in trying to contemplate God's overwhelming majesty. In one of his most penetrating passages, Gregory says, "In the very act of directing its intention [to the Truth], the intellectual soul's [animus] effort is beaten back by the encircling gleam of its immensity. This Truth fills all things; it encircles all things. Therefore, our minds can never be expanded to comprehend the unbounded encircling [incircumscriptam circumstantiam], because it is hemmed in by the imperfection of its own bounded existence."[32] Continuing in this more analytic mode, Gregory identifies this "kind of imitation of vision" with the "face of God [Dei facies]," distinguishing between the imperfect forms of the facial vision, such as that experienced by Jacob in his struggle with the angel (Gen. 32.30), and the perfect facial vision of heaven alluded to by Paul in 1 Cor. 13.12.

The final text on the experience of contemplation that I shall examine here comes from *Hom.Ez.* 2.1.17–18. Once again, the pope anchors his explanation both in scriptural archetypes and in the language of experience. The opening aptly summarizes much of what we have already seen: "Often the intellectual soul, suspended in divine contemplation, rejoices that it already perceives through a kind of image something of that eternal freedom 'which eye has not seen nor ear heard' [1 Cor 2.9]. Nonetheless, it is beaten back by the weight of its mortality, sent down to the depths where it is held bound by the chains of its punishment."[33] Gregory describes this experience as one of looking at the gates that enter upon true freedom, but not yet being able to pass through them. This allows him to call upon several Old Testament mystical prototypes. The first is that of the Jewish people during the wandering in the desert, who were commanded to stand at the entrance of their tents and adore the "column of cloud," the sign of the divine presence (Exod. 33.8–10). "We stand where we fix our mind's eyes," as he puts it. But if we, as antitypes of the Jews, can only stand and look toward heaven, Moses was able to enter the tabernacle as the model of "any holy preacher who speaks of divine mysteries because he has in some part already entered the tabernacle of the heavenly

dwelling." For a visionary like Moses, contemplation in this life is the ultimate "liminal" situation, being ambiguously poised between time and eternity, as the second example Gregory adduces shows even more clearly. The prophet Elijah, when he heard the voice of the Lord behind him, went to stand at the mouth of the cave and veiled his face, "because when the voice of supernal understanding comes into the mind from the grace of contemplation, the total person is no longer just confined within the cave (the care of the flesh doesn't dominate the soul), but he stands at the mouth because he meditates on escaping from the constraints of mortality."[34]

Elijah's veiling his head while standing at the cave mouth is, not surprisingly, read in terms of Gregory's usual insistence on the humility that comes from contemplation, as well as the need to avoid imagining anything bodily in the divine reality, which is "everywhere entire and everywhere unencircled." But this particular text adds to what we have seen only in hints thus far: it emphasizes the fulfillment of all these archetypes of contemplation in the final reality of Christ, whose saving works and presence in the Church enable us, like Elijah, to "long for the King, to desire the citizens we know, and while standing in this edifice of Holy Church to fix our eyes on the door."[35] Gregory's mysticism, like that of the other Fathers, always has a pronounced ecclesiological dimension.

These few passages among so many give us at least a broad picture of Gregory's teaching on the experience of contemplation. They make clear what many recent students of the great pope have already emphasized: how alternations, polarities, and mutually interactive oppositions are used to convey the paradoxes of the Christian life, most especially with regard to the consciousness of divine presence.

Gregory's mysticism has often been spoken of as a mysticism of seeing or a mysticism of light,[36] and given the emphasis found on the experience of "uncircumscribed" or "unencircled Light" found in the texts we have examined, there is no need to deny this. But Gregory's is also a mysticism of darkness, if not the darkness of the speculative apophaticism of Dionysius, certainly the experiential obscurity of Job's *visio nocturna* (Job 4.13 and 33.15) in which the sinful creature recoils in dread when confronted with the majesty of God.[37]

The light imagery in Gregory is qualified not only by the *visio nocturna* but also by one of the pope's most original images (and one that seems based on his own experience): the *rima contemplationis,* which we can translate as both "chink" and "flash" of contemplation.[38] In commenting on the Temple vision of Ezek. 40, Gregory made use of a strange biblical verse that can be translated as "splayed windows in the inner chambers" (Ezek. 40.16, "et fenestras obliquas in thalamis") to advance his teaching about the flashes of divine light that appear to the contemplative through the narrow confines of our created *intellegentia.* "In splayed windows," he says, "the part through which the light enters is narrow, but the interior part that receives the light is wide because the minds of those contemplating, although they see only a bit of the True Light in tenuous fashion, are still enlarged [dilatantur] in themselves to a great breadth." He goes on to note that "from that little bit the inner reaches of their minds [sinus mentium] are opened up in an increase of fervor and love, and they become more spacious within so that they admit Truth's Light inside through narrow openings."[39] The same teaching about the *fenestrae obliquae* or *rimae* discussed at length in *Hom.Ez.* 2.5.16–19 appears in two other places in the Gregorian corpus.[40] Aelred Squire has reminded us of how closely the kind of experience Gregory is speaking of here parallels accounts of mystical light in Islam.[41]

If light and darkness form one of the basic polarities of Gregory's account of mystical consciousness, then, as Grover Zinn has shown, sound and silence constitute another.[42] The notion of speaking to God and having God answer, especially in the intimate discourse of lovers, is an important theme in Gregory's writings. We also find a verbal equivalent of the "flash" of contemplation in passages that speak about the "whispering" of contemplation based on Job 4.14 (see *Mor.* 5.29.51–52). In *Hom.Ez.* 2.1.17–18, Gregory talks of hearing the voice of supernal intelligence and of the voice of interior substance that sounded through the mind. Nevertheless, silence played a significant role in Gregory's mysticism. For the pope, it is a question not only of canceling the noises of the exterior world (see, e.g., *Mor.* 4.33.66, 5.6.9, 5.31.54, 22.20.37), but also of the necessity for an interior silence that is more than just the absence of mundane noise. Commenting on the Apocalypse text, "There was silence in heaven, as it were a half-hour" (Apoc. 8.1),

the pope noted that the half-hour signifies the imperfection of all contemplative silence in this life. Even this imperfect interior silence is hard won. Gregory advises:

> Solitude of mind is rightly given at first to those turning from the world in order to restrain the clamor of earthly desires rising from within and to stifle through the grace of supernal love the cares of the heart, boiling over into the depths . . . It is like chasing away some circling flies from the mind's eyes with the hand of seriousness [gravitas]—as if they seek a kind of secret within between God and themselves where they can silently speak with him through internal desires when all outside rumble has ceased.[43]

Gregory concludes that "in that silence of the heart, while we keep watch within through contemplation, we are as if asleep to all things that are without."[44] These passages confirm Zinn's observation that "Gregory's silence is the interiorized awareness of Absolute Reality."[45]

Other polarities found in Gregory concentrate on the human reactions to contemplative consciousness. Three of these pertain to contemplation in this life; the fourth is true here and will continue even in heaven. First, we have already noted Gregory's insistence on the sudden onset and brevity of contemplation (*raptim,* as he often says, e.g., *Mor.* 5.33.58). The polarity between attainment, arrival, even the "touching" of God, if only briefly,[46] and the experience of failure *(relapsus, reverberatio),* as noted above, is a key element in his teaching. Although Augustine too spoke of the soul's *reverberatio* (literally, "being beaten back"; e.g., *Confessions* 7.10.16), Gregory insists on the experience even more than did the bishop of Hippo.[47]

The other principal existential polarities that appear in the pope's writings cannot be treated in detail here. These include joy/fear and elevation/temptation (both characteristic of our present experience). Finally, there is satisfaction/hunger, a theme in which Gregory made his contribution to what his predecessor Gregory of Nyssa called *epektasis,* which in various guises has been among the most perduring themes in Christian mysticism: Can you ever get enough of God?

Even a brief investigation of the nature of contemplation in Gregory's writings finally leads us to the question of the pope's own mystical experience, especially since the words *experimentum* and

more rarely *experientia* are found in his writings,[48] though not in the three autobiographical references to his own contemplative graces. In this area Gregory appears to be a transitional figure. Although he took much from his predecessors, and though he did not depart from them in building his teaching on the biblical text, his writings display more detailed interest in the exploration of contemplative consciousness than was typical among most earlier patristic authors.[49] Gregory does not dwell on his own mystical visions and experiences, but he does show a concern for investigating contemplation from a wide variety of angles. In this, he signals the beginning of a shift toward experiential accounts that would grow stronger in the twelfth century. This shift, I believe, is also evident in the interest he took in the contemplative experience of his contemporaries, especially in the account of Benedict's vision found in the second book of the *Dialogues,* perhaps the most famous nonbiblical vision in the early Middle Ages.[50]

The text is too long to be given in full, but a translation and consideration of the essential passages will bring out how the vision both illustrates the pope's teaching on *contemplatio* found in his scriptural commentaries and also adds some distinctive elements.[51] On the occasion of a visit from the deacon Servandus, when all had retired for the night, Benedict, "standing at the window in prayer to Almighty God, in the dead of night suddenly gazed and saw light poured down from on high that cast away all night's gloom and blazed forth with such splendor that this light illuminating the darkness would have been brighter than the day." What followed was even more wonderful *(mira res).* "The whole world was brought before his eyes, gathered together, as it were, in a single ray of light." As he "fixed his gaze on this brilliant gleam of light, he saw the soul of Germanus, the bishop of Capua, carried up to heaven in a fiery sphere by angels."[52] Benedict then called Servandus, who, since he was not as high in contemplation as the saint, was able to see "only a small part of the light." They then sent messengers who discovered that Germanus had died just when Benedict saw him taken to heaven.

This remarkable direct account (the historical *narratio*) leads to an *explanatio,* that is, a deeper penetration of the meaning (another form of the *interna intellegentia*).[53] Deacon Peter, who is not a mystic ("I've never had such an experience," he says), asks Gregory

how it is possible to see the whole world. I give Gregory's response in full, emphasizing the phrases that are especially characteristic of his other accounts of mystical contemplation:

> To the soul that sees the Creator every creature is *limited.* To anyone who sees even a *little of the light of the Creator* everything created will become small, because in the *very light of the intimate vision the inner reaches of the mind are opened up.* It is so expanded in God that it stands above the world. The soul of someone who sees in this way is also above itself. *When the soul is rapt above itself in God's light, it is enlarged in its interior;* while it gazes beneath it, in its high state it comprehends how small that is which it could not comprehend when it was in a lowly state. Therefore, the man who, looking at the fiery globe, also saw the angels returning to heaven without doubt was able to do so *only in the light of God.* What wonder is it then if he saw the world gathered together before him, he who was lifted up outside the world *in the light of the mind?* That the world is said to have been gathered together before his eyes is not because heaven and earth were contracted, but because *the intellectual soul of the one who saw was enlarged.* He who is *rapt in God* can see everything that is beneath God without difficulty. In that light which shone on his external eyes there was *an interior light in the mind* which showed the intellectual soul of the one seeing (because he had been rapt to higher things) just how limited was everything beneath it.[54]

This remarkable text, like Augustine's famous Ostia vision or Ambrose's accounts of the soul's ascent to God in his treatise *On Isaac,*[55] fuses a rich vein of themes from classical mystical traditions, Stoic and Platonic, with a basically Christian and deeply biblical view of ascent whose language exhibits close affinities with other mystical texts of the pope in almost every phrase.[56] Scholars beginning with Odo Casel have pointed out the sources in Hellenistic mysticism, especially the close connection with Cicero's *Dream of Scipio* and Macrobius's noted commentary on it. But to admit these should not lead to the conclusion that the vision is somehow more "Hellenic" than Christian. The same delicate process of fusion of languages evident in so many of the early Fathers was also still at work in Gregory the Great.

The incident needs to be seen, first of all, in its place in the careful structure of Gregory's whole life of Benedict. Here it functions as a culminating point in a portrait of three stages in the abbot's path to sanctity: the retreat to a place of solitude ("ad locum dilectae solitudinis rediit"), then the living within himself ("habitavit secum") also noted at the beginning of his career (*Dial.* 2.3),[57] and finally the rapture above himself ("rapitur super se") of this important moment toward the end of his life.[58] It also comes as the middle of three heavenly ascents after death, between that of Scholastica whom Benedict sees as a dove going to heaven (*Dial.* 2.34) and the dream vision given to the two monks of the magnificent shining road that marks Benedict's way to heaven (*Dial.* 2.37).[59] Benedict's superiority as a contemplative is highlighted by the fact that he alone, on the occasion of the death of Germanus, has the heavenly experience while still in this life.[60]

T. Delforge and Pierre Courcelle have shown that Gregory must have used Cicero and Macrobius for the notion of a fiery globe ascending to heaven.[61] But it is more significant to note how Gregory has adapted the image to the Christian view of God: the fire is no longer the manifestation of the immanent physical divine fire of Stoic tradition, but is the ministering creature of the divine *lumen incircumscriptum,* which always remained the pope's favored image for God's transcendence.[62] Another typically Gregorian touch is the way in which the account emphasizes how the exterior light of the vision formed the medium within which the interior light that produced the meaning was born—a good illustration of the constant interaction between interiority and exteriority in the pope's thought.[63] The notion of the expansion of the soul so often found in Gregory's writings (see especially *Hom.Ez.* 2.5.17 where the same use of both *sinus* and *mens* is found) here takes on a rather unusual dimension. Nowhere else in his writings does Gregory dwell at such length on a vision of the world from the divine vantage point, and as David Bell has pointed out, such visions are rare in medieval accounts.[64] This seems to be an argument for the "authenticity" of the vision, at least in the sense that Gregory may have been recounting a tradition kept alive at Monte Cassino of something that befell the saint about the year 541. In the *Dialogues* he retells that story with his own explanation of what it meant.

One further issue about this famous text deserves some comment. Several scholastics, including Thomas Aquinas, considered the question of whether or not Benedict had enjoyed direct vision of the divine essence according to Gregory's account.[65] Abbot Butler also wondered if the language employed in Gregory's text suggests something more than the pope's usual insistence on the limitations of all vision here below.[66] Robert Gillet thought that while Gregory ordinarily emphasized the imperfection of all vision here below, like Augustine, he allowed for miraculous exceptions and that Benedict joined Moses and Paul on that list.[67] Ambrose Schaut, in a very full investigation, is inclined to doubt this, as is David Bell.[68] This may be the wrong kind of question to ask of Gregory, who is rarely interested in speculative issues. While he does use the language of "seeing the Creator [animae videnti creatorem]" here, he also emphasizes the limitation of the light that Benedict saw ("parum de luce creatoris"). If Gregory thought it was a direct vision (which he neither explicitly says nor denies), he certainly also wished to emphasize its continuing limitation.

Gregory the Great's teaching on the nature of contemplation is part of a total spiritual and moral program that was immensely influential throughout the medieval period. Abstracting this core from its matrix in his rich and often discursive presentations is bound to produce a certain distortion, but I trust the foregoing account will have provided at least an entry into the complex whole of *contemplatio* in Gregorian thought. The great pope has been given many honorific titles from his own time down to ours. I would suggest that *doctor contemplationis* is not the least of these.

Notes

1. It may be helpful here to give two lists, by no means exhaustive, of major texts. First, those that deal primarily with contemplation in itself: *Mor.* 4.24.45–25.46 (*CCSL* 143:190–92); 4.33.67–34.68 (*CCSL* 143:210–14); 5.28.50–37.67 (*CCSL* 143:252–67); 8.30.49–50 (*CCSL* 143:410–22); 10.8.13–9.15 (*CCSL* 143:545–49); 18.54.88–93 (*CCSL* 143A:950–55); 23.19.35–21.43 (*CCSL* 143B:1170–77); 24.6.10–12 (*CCSL* 143B:1194–96); 30.16.52–54 (*CCSL* 143B:1527–28); 31.49.99–51.103 (*CCSL* 143B:1618–21); 35.3.4 (*CCSL* 143B:1776–77); 35.20.48 (*CCSL* 143B:1808–10). *Hom.Ez.* 1.7.8–10 (*SC* 327:244–51); 1.8.13–17 (*SC* 327:292–99); 1.8.30–32 (*SC* 327:322–27); 2.1.16–18 (*SC* 360:82–91); 2.2.1–3 (*SC*

360:92–99); 2.2.12–15 (*SC* 360:112–25); 2.3.8–11 (*SC* 360:138–45); 2.4.15 *(SC* 360:214–17); 2.5.8–11 (*SC* 360:240–51); 2.5.17–20 (*SC* 360: 260–67); 2.7.10 (*SC* 360:344–47). *Dial.* 2.3.5 (*SC* 260:142–50); 2.35 (*SC* 260:236–42); 4.1 (*SC* 265.18–22). *Reg.* 1.61–71 (*CCSL* 144:87–95).

The second list includes major discussions of contemplation and action: *Mor.* 6.37.56–61 (*CCSL* 143:325–31); 10.15.31 (*CCSL* 143: 559–60); 18.43.69–70 (*CCSL* 143A:935–36); 27.24.44 (*CCSL* 143B:1363–65); 28.13.33 (*CCSL* 143B:1420–21); 30.2.8 (*CCSL* 143B:1495–96); 30.13.48 (*CCSL* 143B:1523–24); 32.3.4 (*CCSL* 143B:1628–30). *Hom.Ez.* 1.3.9–13 (*SC* 327:128–39); 1.5.12–13 (*SC* 327:184–91); 1.10.24 (*SC* 327:414); 2.2.7–15 (*SC* 360:104–25); 2.3.22 (*SC* 360:170–73); 2.6.5 (*SC* 360:278–81). *Hom.Ev.* 1.18.3 (*PL* 76:1152); 2.38.9–12 (*PL* 76:1287–90); 2.39.7–10 (*PL* 76:1298–1301). *Reg.* 1.64 (*CCSL* 144:89–90); 1.71–82 (*CCSL* 144:95–102); 5.177–80 (*CCSL* 144:528–32). *RP* 1.7 (*PL* 77:20–21); 2.5 (*PL* 77:32–32. *Ep.* 7.3–4 (*CCSL* 140:445–47).

Important discussions of contemplation in Gregory are to be found in Butler, *Western Mysticism,* 91–133; Franz Lieblang, *Grundfragen der mystischen theologie nach Gregors des Grossen Moralia und Ezechielhomilien* (Freiburg-im-Breisgau: Herder, 1934), 99–170; Straw, *Gregory,* 225–31; A. Ménager, "La contemplation d'après Saint Grégoire le Grand," *La vie spirituelle* 9 (1923): 242–82; and Ménager, "Les divers sens du mot 'contemplatio' chez saint Grégoire le Grand," *La vie spirituelle,* suppl. (June 1939): 145–69 and (July 1939): 39–56; and R. Gillet, "Grégoire le Grand," in *DSp,* 6:897–905.

2. *Mor.* 8.18.34 (*CCSL* 143:406.27–30): "Ad contemplandum quippe Creatorem homo conditus fuerat ut eius semper speciem quaereret, atque in sollemnitate illius amoris habitaret."

3. This aspect of Gregory's teaching was well brought out by Lieblang, *Grundfragen,* 29–43; cf. Dagens, *Grégoire,* 165–75; and Patrick Catry, *Parole de Dieu, Amour et Esprit-Saint chez Saint Grégoire-le-Grand* (Abbaye de Bellefontaine: Vie Monastique, 1984), 86–87.

4. On the importance of *soliditas* and its equivalent, *stabilitas,* in Gregory's thought, see Straw, *Gregory,* chap. 3, especially 75–81.

5. *Dial.* 4.1 (*SC* 265:18.3–5): "quia peccando extra semetipsum fusus iam illa caelestis patriae gaudia, quae prius contemplabatur, videre non potuit."

6. *Lubrica mutabilitas* is treated in Straw, *Gregory,* chap. 5.

7. *Dial.* 4.1 (*SC* 265:20.33–22.43): "Vnde factum est, ut ipse uisibilium et inuisibilium creator ad humani generis redemptionem Vnigenitus Patris ueniret, et sanctum Spiritum ad corda nostra mitteret, quatenus per eum uiuificati crederemus, quae adhuc scire experimento non possumus . . . Quisquis autem in hac credulitate adhuc solidus non

est, debet procul dubio maiorum dictis fidem praebere, eisque iam per Spiritum sanctum inuisibilium experimentum habentibus credere."

8. See Straw, *Gregory,* chap. 4, "Soliditas Caritatis."

9. *Mor.* 8.30.49 (*CCSL* 143:421.23–28): "haec saliua ad os quidem labitur, ut uero ad uentrem usque perueniat non glutitur; quia diuinitatis contemplatio sensum tangit, sed plene mentem non reficit, quoniam perfecte animus conspicere non ualet quod adhuc, quia caligo corruptionis praepedit, raptim uidet." Gregory underlines the message of 8.30.49 by repeating it with subtle variations in 8.30.50 (*CCSL* 143:421–22).

10. See, e.g., *Hom.Ez.* 2.2.10 (*SC* 360:110.5–8): "contemplatiua uero simplex ad solum uidendum principium anhelat, uidelicet ipsum qui ait: *Ego sum principium, propter quod et loquor vobis* [John 8.25]" (The contemplative life is a single one devoted only to beholding the First Principle, the one who says, "I am the Principle, this is why I speak to you"). Cf. *Hom.Ez.* 2.2.8 (*SC* 360:106.6–14) for another example. A. Ménager, "Les divers sens," calculates that in his major works, Gregory uses *contemplatio* 302 times and *contemplari* 110 times.

11. Lieblang, *Grundfragen,* 27–28, specifies five different uses; Ménager, "Les divers sens," also identifies five, but of a somewhat different character.

12. David Hurst, *Gregory the Great: Forty Gospel Homilies* (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1990), 2.

13. See the important paper of Grover A. Zinn, "Sound, Silence and Word in the Spirituality of Gregory the Great," in Fontaine et al., *Grégoire,* 367–75.

14. *Mor.* 31.49.99 (*CCSL* 143B:1619.26): "Sola namque eius uisio uera mentis nostrae refectio est." The passage contrasts the finality of the divine vision with the lower visions we gain of the heavenly spirits.

15. See Jean Leclercq, "The Teaching of St. Gregory," in *The Spirituality of the Middle Ages,* ed. Jean Leclercq, François Vandenbroucke, and Louis Bouyer (New York: Seabury Press, 1986), 13–15.

16. See, e.g., *Mor.* 5.33.60 (*CCSL* 143:260–61); 17.27.39–40 (*CCSL* 143A:873–74); 22.20.50 (*CCSL* 143A:1128–30).

17. E.g., *Mor.* 5.30.53 and 10.8.13 (*CCSL* 143:254–55, 545–47); 27.40.67 (*CCSL* 143B:1384).

18. See *Mor.* 20.32.62 (*CCSL* 142A:1048), a passage later cited with approval by Meister Eckhart. Cf. *Mor.* 2.7.8 (*CCSL* 143:64–65).

19. E.g., *Mor.* 2.12.20 and 10.9.14–15 (*CCSL* 143:72–73, 547–49). See Michael Frickel, *Deus totus ubique simul: Untersuchungen zur allgemeinen Gottesgegenwart im Rahmen der Gotteslehre Gregors der Grossen* (Freiburg-im-Breisgau: Herder, 1956).

20. A more complete consideration will appear as chapter 2 of my *Growth of Mysticism,* vol. 2 of *The Presence of God* (New York: Crossroad, 1994), 34–79.

21. On three occasions, Gregory did briefly refer to his own contemplative experiences. See the related passages in *Dial. praef.* and *Ep.* 1.5 (*CCSL* 140:5–7), as well as *Hom.Ez.* 2.2.1 (*SC* 360:92–95).

22. See Catry, *Parole de Dieu,* 119.

23. For lists, at least for the *Moralia,* see Paul Aubin, "Intériorité et extériorité dans les *Moralia in Job* de Saint Grégoire le Grand," *RechSR* 62 (1974): 156–57, 160–61.

24. *Mor.* 6.6.9 (*CCSL* 143:224.3–4): "diuina contemplatio quoddam sepulcrum mentis est quo absconditur anima." Cf. *Mor.* 6.37.56 and 59 (*CCSL* 143:325–26, 329).

25. E.g., *Mor.* 5.30.53 (*CCSL* 143:254–55); 6.37.56 (*CCSL* 143: 325–27); 30.16.54 (*CCSL* 143B:1528); 31.51.102 (*CCSL* 143B:1620–21).

26. *Ecstasis,* a rare word with Gregory, who usually prefers *excessus.* The Latin translation of the LXX (the *Psalterium Gallicanum*) has "in excessu mentis" here while the Vulgate has "in stupore mentis."

27. *Mor.* 23.21.41 (*CCSL* 143B:1176.60–70): "Subleuatus in ecstasi, quod nostri interpretes pauorem non proprie uocauerunt [some MSS omit *non*], a uultu oculorum Dei uidit se esse proiectum. Post interni quippe luminis uisionem quae in eius anima per contemplationis gratiam radio claritatis emicuit, ad semetipsum rediit; et cognitione percepta, uel quibus illic bonis deesset, uel quibus malis hic adesset, inuenit . . . subleuatus quippe uidit quod se hic uidere non posse ad se relapsus ingemuit."

28. "Imaginatio circumscriptae uisionis . . . in unum se colligere nititur, ut si magna ui amoris praeualet, esse unum atque incorporeum contempletur" (*Mor.* 23.21.42; *CCSL* 1176:77–82).

29. *Mor.* 24.6.10 (*CCSL* 143B:1195.8–11): "Iubilum namque dicitur, quando ineffabile gaudium mente concipitur, quod nec abscondi possit, nec sermonibus aperiri; et tamen quibusdam motibus proditur, quamuis nullis proprietatibus exprimatur."

30. *Mor.* 24.6.10 (*CCSL* 143B:1195.16–18): "Sentitur per illam quippe, quod ultra sensum est. Et cum uix ad hoc contemplandum sufficiat conscientia sentientis, quomodo ad hoc exprimendum sufficiat lingua dicentis?"

31. *Mor.* 24.6.11 (*CCSL* 143B:1195.37–96.40): "Cui ueritati tanto magis se longe existimat, quanto magis appropinquat, quia nisi illam utcumque conspiceret, nequaquam eam conspicere se non posse sentiret."

32. *Mor.* 24.6.12 (*CCSL* 143B:1196.41–46): "Adnisus ergo animi, dum in illa intenditur, immensitatis eius coruscante circumstantia

reuerberatur. Ipsa quippe cuncta implens, cuncta circumstat; et idcirco mens nostra nequaquam se ad comprehendendam incircumscriptam circumstantiam dilatat, quia eam inopia suae circumscriptionis angustat." Could Henry Vaughan have had this passage in mind when he wrote the noted lines: "I saw Eternity the other night/Like a great ring of pure and endless light,/All calm, as it was bright."

33. *Hom.Ez.* 2.1.17 (*SC* 360:86.1–6): "Saepe namque animus ita in diuina contemplatione suspenditur, ut iam se percipere de aeterna illa libertate quam *oculus non uidit, nec auris audiuit,* aliquid per quamdam imaginem laetetur, sed tamen, mortalitatis suae pondere reuerberatus, ad ima relabitur et quibusdam poenae suae uinculis ligatus tenetur."

34. *Hom.Ez.* 2.1.17 (*SC* 360:88.14–15, 26–28, 37–41): "Ibi etenim stamus, ubi mentis oculos figimus . . . quia cum sanctus quisque praedicator alta de Deo loquitur, supernae habitationis iam utcumque tabernaculum ingreditur . . . quia cum per contemplationis gratiam uox supernae intellegentiae sit in mente, totus homo iam intra speluncam non est, quia animum carnis cura non possidet, sed stat in ostio, quia mortalitatis angustias exire meditatur."

35. *Hom.Ez.* 2.1.18 (*SC* 360:90.18–20): "concupiscamus Regem, desideremus ciues quos cognouimus, atque in hoc sanctae Ecclesiae aedificio stantes oculos in porta teneamus."

36. E.g., Gillet, "Grégoire," in *DSp,* 6:895; Leclercq, "The Teaching of St. Gregory," 29. For a summary of Gregory's teaching on the Divine Light, see Butler, *Western Mysticism,* 109–11.

37. Butler, *Western Mysticism,* 127–28, already noted Gregory's departure from Augustine in this connection.

38. The "chink" suggests the objective aspect—that is, how the divine light is restricted when it has to pass through any created medium—while the "flash" suggests the experience itself, as when, in a darkened room, we are suddenly struck by a gleam of light coming through an aperture. Butler, *Western Mysticism,* 111, notes the importance of this.

39. *Hom.Ez.* 2.5.17 (*SC* 360:260.1–62.10): "In fenestris obliquis pars illa per quam lumen intrat angusta porta est, sed pars interior quae lumen suscipit lata, quia mentes contemplantium quamuis aliquid tenuiter de uero lumine uideant, in semetipsis tamen magna amplitudine dilatantur . . . [E]x ipso exiguo laxatur sinus mentium in augmentum feruoris et amoris, et inde apud se amplae fiunt, unde ad se ueritatis lumen quasi per angustias admittunt."

40. See *Mor.* 5.29.52 (*CCSL* 143:253.30–54.33); and *Hom.Ez.* 1.8.17 (*SC* 327:298.15–19).

41. Aelred K. Squire, "Light in Gregory the Great and in the Islamic Tradition," *Studia patristica* 23 (1989): 197–202.

42. See Zinn, "Sound, Silence and Word."

43. *Mor.* 30.16.52 (*CCSL* 143B:1527.9–17): "Itaque bene conuersantibus primum solitudo mentis tribuitur, ut exsurgentem intrinsecus strepitum terrenorum desideriorum premant; ut ebullientes ad infima curas cordis per superni gratiam restinguant amoris . . . quasi quasdam circumuolantes muscas ab oculis mentis abigant manu grauitatis; et quoddam sibi cum Domino intra se secretum quaerant, ubi cum illo exteriori cessante strepitu per interna desideria silenter loquantur."

44. *Mor.* 30.16.54 (*CCSL* 143B:1528.58–60): "In hoc itaque silentium cordis, dum per contemplationem interius uigilamus, exterius quasi obdormiscimus."

45. Zinn, "Sound, Silence and Word," 371.

46. On "touching" God, see, e.g., *Mor.* 10.8.13 (*CCSL* 143:546.5); and *Hom.Ez.* 2.7.10 (*SC* 360:346.25–27). Augustine had also used such language.

47. The texts are so numerous that I cite only a selection of the more important: *Mor.* 5.33.58–60 (*CCSL* 143:559–60); 8.6.9 (*CCSL* 143:386–88); 8.30.50 (*CCSL* 143:421–22); 8.32.54 (*CCSL* 143:424); 9.19.29 (*CCSL* 143:477–78); 16.8.12 (*CCSL* 143A:805); 16.31.38 (*CCSL* 143A:821–22); 24.5.10–12 (*CCSL* 143B:1194–96); *Hom.Ez.* 2.1.17, (*SC* 360:86–89); 2.2.3 and 12 (*SC* 360:96–99, 112–15); 2.4.11 (*SC* 360:206–7).

48. *Experientia* occurs largely in the *Commentary on 1 Kings;* see, e.g., *Reg.* 1.75 (*CCSL* 144:97.1670–73): "perfectionem contemplationis habet in spe, quam nondum habet in uirtute experientiae."

49. Gregory also appears, at least on the basis of one text, to have shown some interest in the physical phenomenon of contemplative consciousness. In *Mor.* 12.30.35 (*CCSL* 143A:649.2–4), he notes the blank appearance of the face of those suspended in higher contemplation: "Saepe iustorum mens ita ad altiora contemplanda suspenditur, ut exterius eorum facies obstupuisse uideatur."

50. The literature on Benedict's vision is extensive, both in terms of medieval discussions and modern ones. In the modern period, see Odo Casel, "Zur Vision des hl. Benedikt," *Studien und Mitteilungen zur Geschichte der Benediktinerorderns* 38 (1917): 345–48; Butler, *Western Mysticism,* 123–25, 132–33, 176; Joseph Maréchal, *Etudes sur la psychologie des mystiques,* 2 vols. (Paris: C. Beyaert, 1937), 2:205–6: Ambrosius Schaut, "Die Vision des Heiligen Benedikt," in *Vir Dei Benedictus: Eine Festgabe zum 1400 Todestag des hl. Benedikt,* ed. Raphael Molitor (Münster: Aschendorff, 1947), 207–53; T. Delforge, "Songe de Scipion et vision de saint Benoît," *RvBén* 69 (1959): 351–54;

Pierre Courcelle, "La vision cosmique de saint Benoît," *RvEAug* 13 (1967): 97–117; Basilius Steidle, "Die kosmische Vision des Gottesmannes Benedikt," *Erbe und Auftrag* 47 (1971): 187–92, 298–315, 409–14; V. Recchia, "La visione di S. Benedetto e la 'compositio' del secondo libro dei 'Dialoghi' di Gregorio Magno," *RvBén* 82 (1972): 140–55; and David N. Bell, "The Vision of the World and the Vision of the Archetypes in the Latin Spirituality of the Middle Ages," *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du moyen âge* 44 (1977): 7–31. On medieval discussions, see J. Muller, "La vision de S. Benoît dans l'interprétation des théologiens scholastiques," in *Mélanges bénédictins* (Saint-Wandrille: Editions de Fontenelle, 1947), 145–201; and E. Lanne, "L'interprétation palamite de la vision de S. Benoît," in *Le millénaire du Mont-Athos* (Venice: Fondazione Cini, 1964), 21–47.

51. The narrative of the vision itself from *Dial.* 2.35 (*SC* 260: 236.15–38.29): "Cumque uir Domini Benedictus, adhuc quiescentibus fratribus, instans uigiliis, nocturnae orationis tempora praeuenisset, ad fenestram stans et omnipotentem Dominum depraecans, subito intempesta noctis hora respiciens, uidit fusam lucem desuper cunctas noctis tenebras exfugasse, tantoque splendore clarescere, ut diem uinceret lux illa, quae inter tenebras radiasset. Mira autem ualde res in hac speculatione secuta est, quia, sicut post ipse narrauit, omnis etiam mundus, uelut sub uno solis radio collectus, ante oculos eius adductus est. Qui uenerabilis pater, dum intentam oculorum aciem in hoc splendore coruscae lucis infigeret, uidit Germani Capuani episcopi animam in spera ignea ab angelis in caelum ferri."

52. Courcelle, "La vision cosmique," 105, shows that the *spera ignea,* originally a Stoic image, had already been taken over as a sign of sanctity in Sulpicius Severus, *Dialogi* 2.2.2 (*CSEL* 1:181–82).

53. On the double form of the account, see the remarks of Recchia, "La visione di S. Benedetto," 140–45 and 154–55. Could this double account contain a reminiscence of the two versions of Augustine's famous Ostia vision contained in *Confessions* 9.10.23–26? Courcelle, "La vision cosmique," 102, notes that both the Ostia vision and Benedict's take place at windows. Recchia, "La visione di S. Benedetto," 145–46, draws attention to the parallel between *ad fenestram stans* of the vision and the *fenestrae obliquae* of Ezek. 40.16, so important to Gregory's view of mystical contemplation.

54. *Dial.* 2.35 (*SC* 260:240.50–71): "quia animae uidenti creatorem angusta est omnis creatura. Quamlibet etenim parum de luce creatoris aspexerit, breue ei fit omne quod creatum est, quia ipsa luce uisionis intimae mentis laxatur sinus, tantumque expanditur in Deo, ut superior existat mundo. Fit uero ipsa uidentis anima etiam super semetipsam.

Cumque in Dei lumine rapitur super se, in interioribus ampliatur, et dum sub se conspicit, exaltata conprehendit quam breue sit, quod conprehendere humiliata non poterat. Vir ergo qui intueri globum igneum, angelos quoque ad caelum redeuntes uidebat, haec procul dubio cernere nonnisi in Dei lumine poterat. Quid itaque mirum, si mundum ante se collectum uidit, qui subleuatus in mentis lumine extra mundum fuit? Quod autem collectus mundus ante eius oculos dicitur, non caelum et terra contracta est, sed uidentis animus dilatatus, qui, in Deo raptus, uidere sine difficultate potuit omne quod infra Deum est. In illa ergo luce, quae exterioribus oculis fulsit, lux interior in mente fuit, quae uidentis animum quia ad superiora rapuit, ei quam angusta essent omnia inferiora monstrauit."

55. On these texts, see Bernard McGinn, *Foundations of Mysticism,* vol. 1 of *The Presence of God* (New York: Crossroad, 1991), 210–13 (Ambrose) and 234–35 (Augustine).

56. For some lists of these affinities, see Butler, *Western Mysticism,* 124; and Courcelle, "La vision cosmique," 106–7. Recchia, "La Visione di S. Benedetto," emphasizes the scriptural basis.

57. See Pierre Courcelle, "'Habitare secum' selon Perse et saint Grégoire le Grand," *RvEAnc* 69 (1967): 266–79.

58. On these stages, see Marc Doucet, "Pédagogie et théologie dans la 'Vie de saint Benoît'," *Collectanea Cisterciensia* 38 (1976): 161–65.

59. *Dial.* 2.37 (*SC* 260:244.17–20): "Viderunt namque quia strata palliis atque innumeris corusca lampadibus uia recto orientis tramite ab eius cella in caelum usque tendebatur."

60. That these three visions were meant to be taken together was obvious to the medieval reader, especially as seen in the iconographic presentations found in a late-eleventh century manuscript from Monte Cassino studied by Courcelle, "La vision cosmique," 114–17.

61. See Cicero, *Somnium Scipionis* 3.7; Macrobius, *Commentarium in Somnium Scipionis* 1.14.4.

62. See Courcelle, "La vision cosmique," 111.

63. See Dagens, *Grégoire,* 223.

64. Bell, "Vision of the World," 8–13.

65. Thomas Aquinas, *Quaestiones quodlibetales* 1.1, denies the fact because Benedict was not completely alienated from his senses in "spiritual" death during the experience. Bernard of Clairvaux also discussed the character of the vision in his *De diversis* 9.1.

66. Butler, *Western Mysticism,* 129–30, did note that at least one text in *Mor.* 18.54.89 (*CCSL* 143A:952.59–62) seems to allow for a form of direct vision of divine light: "Sin uero a quibusdam potest in hac adhuc corruptibili carne uiuentibus, sed tamen inaestimabili uir-

tute crescentibus, quodam contemplationis acumine aeterna Dei claritas uideri."

67. *Grégoire le Grand: Morales sur Job: Livres I et II,* ed. Robert Gillet, *SC* 32 (Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1952), 35n.1.

68. Schaut, "Die Vision des hl. Benedikt," 217–25; Bell, "Vision of the World," 7–11.

9

GROVER A. ZINN, JR.

Exegesis and Spirituality in the Writings of Gregory the Great

As I proceeded to fashion this essay on exegesis and spirituality in the writings of Gregory the Great, I asked myself from time to time if there might be an image that would suggest the various aspects of this project in a kind of concentrated visualization. The answer came to me one evening in terms of jewels and their settings. The jewels are the numerous passages in Gregory's exegetical writings that present his teaching about the complex set of ideas and disciplines called "mysticism" by modern writers and given the name "contemplative life" by Gregory. The settings in this image are the exegetical contexts and the exegetical processes in which the passages, the jewels, have their original existence and in which they exhibit their full power and insight.

These passages of spiritual teaching that I have imaged as jewels—and I think of such passages as Gregory's analysis of the active and contemplative lives in *Homilies on Ezekiel* 2.2[1] or his consideration of contemplation in book 5 of the *Moralia*[2]—offer examples of carefully crafted teaching on the life of asceticism and prayer. In these passages Gregory also develops his teaching on the higher states of consciousness, including the immediate experience of divine Being, of God—an experience usually expressed by Gregory through the image of a glimpse of the "unbounded light [lumen incircumscriptum]" that is God.[3]

In some notable instances these passages can quite accurately be described as brief treatises on aspects of the contemplative quest. However, simply taking these as "brief treatises" emphasizes a characteristic that may lead one to ignore that they are exegesis as

well—or rather that they are exegesis first of all. Indeed, to take an extreme example of this attitude, when Cuthbert Butler, in his book *Western Mysticism,* set out to construct a presentation of Gregory's teaching on the mystical life, he seems to have been only too willing to ignore the fact that he was dealing with works that were first of all works of scriptural exegesis.[4] This becomes very clear from the way in which he presented the pertinent Gregorian texts for his readers. Although he noted that Gregory's teaching is "*embedded* [emphasis mine] in his principal writings,"[5] he never noted that the writings were exegetical. Moreover, in the extracts from Gregorian writings that are used to supply the supporting evidence for his analysis, Butler either suppresses the biblical passages actually mentioned by Gregory or fails to include in his translation passages that draw on or refer to biblical texts, events, or persons.[6] As Susan Schreiner has noted, at one point Butler even declared that the *Moralia* should be read "without any attention to the constant allegorizing."[7] At the very least, this is a rather amazing determination on the part of a scholar to ignore the genre of a writing while resolutely mining its contents in a selective manner for passages that are useful in presenting Gregory's mystical teaching.

Butler's work is an example, perhaps an extreme one, of what I would call the temptation to remove the jewels from their settings. In his analysis we have the individual passages with sparkling insights, moving descriptions, and persuasive presentations of the mystic's quest. But we do not have the setting that provided the matrix for these comments, nor do we have the full interplay of Gregory's thought with the biblical text and with allusions to biblical passages as well.

The medieval tradition had its own way of removing the jewels from their settings, for Gregory's works, especially the *Moralia,* were soon the object of extraction and condensation. In this case the jewels that were removed were the interpretations of individual verses of Scripture. Paterius's work rearranging the comments in the *Moralia* according to biblical books may have made the comments on specific verses more accessible, but it dismembered the body of Gregory's text in order to make the parts, the fragments, more accessible in a new ordering, a new setting if you will.[8] Bede did the same with his extraction of Gregory's comments on the Song of Songs for book 6 of his own commentary on the

Song;[9] so did William of Saint-Thierry when he formed a brief commentary on the Song out of Gregory's comments.[10] But in regard to William's collection of extracts, this must be said: in at least one instance—namely, his extract from the *Moralia* that is keyed to the verse "I sleep but my heart is awake" (Song of Songs 5.2)—William includes enough of the text to reproduce the exegetical process that leads up to Gregory's use of and comment on this verse.[11] William was, at least at this point, willing to keep part of the setting, along with the jewel.

In pursuing the question of the relationship of the setting and the jewels in Gregory's exegesis and spiritual teaching, I would like to begin with a brief examination of the images that Gregory uses to describe either biblical interpretation or the biblical text itself. In doing this, I think we will find that these images convey something about Gregory's perception of the relationship of text, interpretation, and interpreter. Following this, a consideration of several examples of Gregory's exegesis provides the opportunity to see if there are techniques of interpretation that allow him to "embody," as it were, in his practice the metaphors he uses to describe Scripture and its interpretation.

At several points in writings associated with biblical exegesis, Gregory the Great uses striking metaphors to describe either the biblical text itself or the process of interpreting that text. The letter to Leander of Seville that Gregory prefaced to the *Moralia in Job* is particularly rich in metaphorical references to both text and interpretation. The process of exegesis itself is described by means of three different metaphors: the meandering of a river, the serving of a meal, and the construction of a building.[12] In the opening paragraphs of the surviving short fragment of Gregory's commentary on the Song of Songs, there is an arresting statement that describes scriptural allegory as a "kind of machine [quandam machinam]" that lifts up to God the soul that is now in this life placed at a distance from Him.[13] As Ann Matter has noted, the paragraphs in the commentary that follow this statement offer the longest theoretical consideration of allegory in the early Middle Ages.[14] It does seem to me to be of more than passing interest that this lengthy consideration is introduced by a metaphor presenting a biblical sense as a "machine." Somewhat later in the same commentary Gregory likens Scripture itself to a mountain,[15] while in

the letter to Leander, Scripture is compared to a river that is both shallow and deep, enabling the lamb to walk and the elephant to bathe.[16]

Each of these instances serves as an eloquent reminder to us, his readers, that Gregory thought about Scripture and its interpretation in light of some specific visual images. The images tend generally to emphasize the dynamic quality of the exegetical task, the multiple levels of interpretation accessible in the text, and, in the case of the machine of allegory, the possibilities of transformation of the interpreter and/or the reader through interaction with the text.

Of the descriptive phrases mentioned above, three have to do with the behavior of the exegete in relation to Scripture: the meandering river, the serving of a meal, and the construction of a building. The first thing I would observe about these is that they are all processes; they have a dynamic quality reflected quite clearly in the mention of flowing, of providing, of building; they are, as it were, images that suggest in various ways that the interpreter is one who has the task of supplying a need or furnishing something that is not only informative but useful and even delightful for the hearer or reader.

If we look more closely at the images of the meandering river and the serving of food, the descriptive phrases will be seen to focus attention much more directly on the need or needs of the readers and hearers or on the ongoing process of interpretation than on the specific way or ways in which meaning is to be extracted from the text itself. These descriptions contain almost nothing that helps us understand the technical aspects of the way in which Gregory expected exegesis to take place or the resources that the interpreter should draw upon in his effort.

In offering a meandering river as a model, Gregory singles out how rivers may overflow their banks and fill low-lying areas and then, as he says, "return to their bed and continue the course of their flow."[17] This kind of natural behavior, Gregory notes, ought to serve as an example for the interpreter, who will take every reasonable opportunity to divert the course of his interpretation, as it were, and provide useful interpretation that will fill a need—a low-lying or empty place, according to the river comparison—in the lives of his readers or listeners. Although the river does wander about, so to speak, it deviates from its course only for a purpose.

In likening the exegetical task to serving what I think of as a kind of buffet luncheon,[18] Gregory tells us that the host (the interpreter of the text) should make it his goal to provide a meal with a delightful dish for everyone, although he should not expect everyone to like every dish. The object is to provide something to please each palate. This strongly suggests a Gregorian perception that there are not only various needs to be met by the exegete, but also varieties of spiritual tastes and diets. This being the case, the interpreter is well advised to have a keen eye not only for his audience but also for the differing spiritual palates of individuals who come from a wide range of social and religious backgrounds and may well vary greatly in their vocations.

The third image in the *Letter to Leander* is the well-known figure that likens the three senses of Scripture to the construction of a building.[19] The historical or literal interpretation is likened to laying down the foundation for the structure. What Gregory calls the typical or allegorical interpretation erects the walls of the edifice. Finally, the tropological or moral interpretation provides color—a fitting appearance—for the building. This, like the other two images already examined, is, I suggest, an image of a dynamic process. The process is one of creating a "construct," if you will. The "construct" is the result of a process of interpreting a sacred text for the edification of Gregory's audience of listeners and readers. As Gregory tells us, he will labor in the fields of the various modes (history, allegory, tropology) to varying extents, as the case may require. The purpose is to produce an effective construct.

As one inspects the food served up at the exegetical banquet, one may come to wonder why some of the dishes are there. Or to put it differently: One of the aspects of the *Moralia* that makes it simultaneously rich and frustrating is the apparent profusion of biblical texts throughout the work. At the same time that Gregory is giving an interpretation of the Book of Job, he continually turns to texts from other biblical books and offers additional interpretations of them. This profusion of texts was, of course, something that made the *Moralia* such a wonderful source for later medieval digests and compendia of exegesis. One could, as Paterius and others did, construct commentaries on the Bible or form other kinds of compendia from materials carved out of the text of the *Moralia*.[20]

In addition, one could also produce handbooks of moral guidance by extracting relevant passages and ordering them topically.[21]

Although these compendia of interpretation and handbooks of moral guidance were useful, they also violated the integrity of Gregory's text and his exegetical project. For these diverse biblical texts that seem to be strewn, with their accompanying exegesis, throughout the *Moralia* were, for Gregory, part and parcel of the interpretation of the Book of Job. They may appear at first glance to be incidental to the major undertaking, the interpretation of Job, and somewhat peripheral to the so-called treatises on contemplation, asceticism, and other topics that spring up repeatedly in the *Moralia* and Gregory's sermons, but they are nonetheless part of the machinery that makes the exegesis move forward. Indeed, I would suggest that they are a controlling element in shaping Gregory's exegesis not only in the *Moralia* but also in other texts, such as the *Homilies on Ezekiel.* Without the "settings," the "jewels" have a far different appearance.

Gregory's comments about the request that initiated the *Moralia* will help us understand his motivation and purpose for including these additional citations from Scripture.[22] Gregory notes that when the brothers who had accompanied him on his official mission to Constantinople asked him to interpret Job with the allegorical sense directed toward the moral significance, they asked a second thing of him as well: that each interpretation be supported by additional scriptural citations, which Gregory calls "testimonies," and that when necessary these testimonies be given a further interpretation. Thus, from this request sprang the proliferation of biblical texts within Gregory's interpretation. And from this proliferation of texts—and Gregory's particular way of using these texts—comes the motive power of the flowing stream and the varied dishes from the productive kitchen. For the diversions and developments in Gregory's exegesis are sparked and also regulated by the testimonies summoned up in connection with spiritual exegesis.

If we turn to Gregory's exegesis, there are any number of instances in which we can see the selection, control, support, and shaping of interpretations through the use of verses from biblical books other than the Book of Job. The testimonies provide for an opening up of the text, an exploration of the multiple possibilities for meaning—but it is an exploration controlled by the broader connections to be found in the text itself.

My first example is drawn from book 23 of the *Moralia*.[23] Gregory is commenting on verse 20 of chapter 33 of Job: "For that soul's bread and food, which previously had been desirable, now became abominable to him in his life." Gregory's first move is to give a generalized reinterpretation of the text: Whatever satisfied the soul earlier is now turned into bitterness. The "whatever" remains undefined, however, and Gregory proceeds to define it by giving a set of meanings for the word *bread* in sacred Scripture. He finds six meanings: *bread* may refer to the Lord himself, spiritual grace, instruction in divine doctrine, the preaching of heretics, sustenance for the present life, and the pleasure of human delight. Each possible deeper meaning for *bread* is then supported by one or more biblical citations that receive further interpretation if needed. Having thus suggested a rather broad array of options for defining and diverting the discourse in a particular way, Gregory chooses one that fits with the deeper meaning he has discerned in the several previous verses. What Elihu means by *bread,* according to Gregory, is the delight of the present life. This then directs Gregory's own discourse back to the topic of the temptations and distresses of life—even in times of seeming peace and quiet—and the fear and loss of joy that can result. Indeed, this passage takes up the middle term of the tripartite schema of conversion–temptation–death that Carole Straw has so eloquently presented in her contribution to this volume.

In this particular instance, Gregory has made available several possibilities for moral allegory and has presented his listeners/readers with some supporting "evidence" for each possible interpretation. From the range of options thus set forth (a banquet, perhaps?), he has picked one. And it is the one that most appropriately serves his ongoing narrative of the spiritual life at this point in the commentary. While it is possible to look at verses and their interpretation as isolated, single units of meaning, that is not how Gregory proceeded in this case; both the base text and Gregory's allegorical narrative/interpretation moved within a wider framework. This framework was developed and supported on the symbolic, spiritual level by the interlocking network of citations from Job and the other books of Scripture. The testimonies helped define the banks that held the discourse along the riverbed; they moved the flow into the low-lying meadows of useful diversions, and they nudged

it back to the main channel so that Gregory (and the reader and the text) could move on to the next topic.

My second example is a passage that is central to Gregory's spiritual teaching, for it represents the first full exploration in the *Moralia* of the symbolic meaning of sleep, dreams, and visions in the spiritual interpretation of the Book of Job.[24] Gregory is commenting on Job 4.13, "When sleep usually seizes a person." This verse, along with others that mention sleep and dreams or visions, provides a locus for discussing Gregory's views on what we may call the interiorization of consciousness and the dialectic between the outer and inner worlds of consciousness in the spiritual quest.[25]

Job 4.13 represents the first appearance in the Latin (Vulgate) text of Job of the word *sopor* (sleep). This is the word for the sleep that comes to Adam in Paradise when God forms Eve from his side (see Gen. 2.21). Gregory takes this occasion as the opportunity to give three deeper meanings associated with the word *sleep:* the death of the body (*mors carnis;* supported with a testimony from 1 Thess. 4.13–14); negligent listlessness (*torpor neglegentiae;* supported with two testimonies, Rom. 13.11 and 1 Cor. 15.34); and "a time of peaceful rest in life when earthly desires have been trampled underfoot [calcatis terrenis desideriis quies vitae]" (supported by two testimonies also: Song of Songs 5.2, "I sleep and my heart wakes," and Gen. 28.11–13, from the account of Jacob's sleep and dream at Bethel). The Genesis account allows Gregory to draw upon Jacob's stone "pillow," his dream, and the ladder from heaven to earth.

With the Song of Songs citation Gregory introduces an extended discussion of the figurative meaning of *sleep* for the spiritual life. As Gregory explains, interpreted in this sense, it means "suppressing the clanging noise of the craving for temporal things [se ab strepitu temporalis concupiscentiae comprimit]" while remaining inwardly "awake" for things of the spirit. After discussing the statement in Gen. 3.5 that in Paradise the eyes of Adam and Eve were opened only after eating the forbidden fruit of the tree of knowledge, Gregory turns to consider the idea of sleep as a withdrawal of conscious attention from external noise and distraction in order to focus intently and in a lively way on inward experiences that open to the world of spirit and the divine. In closing his discussion of this reforming and refocusing of consciousness, he alludes again to Song of Songs 5.2: "So [the mind] abandons the

clanging noise of earthly actions [terrenarum actionum strepitum deserit], and, intent on virtues through the pursuit of a time of quiet [per quietis studium], it sleeps and remains awake [vigilans dormit]." Gregory then continues, "For the mind is not led to contemplation of inward things unless it is carefully separated from those things that entangle it outwardly [quae exterius implicant]." The succinct sentence from the Song of Songs has enabled Gregory to condense this insight concerning detachment and interiorization of consciousness into a few words from the biblical text, and to use that text as a defining "peg" for his spiritual interpretation of sleep: "I sleep and my heart is awake."

If we reflect on these examples and others that could be offered, it becomes clear that Gregory's allegorical narratives are skillfully executed constructs. Some of the linkages in these constructs may well be obscure, and they may *seem* contrived, but nonetheless they are there. Gregory's elucidation of the meaning of Job is always worked out in a dialogue, if you will, with other texts of Scripture. These other texts, the testimonies, serve a vital purpose of shaping, directing, and/or confirming Gregory's perception of the deeper meaning of the text of Job. While Gregory's numerous "units" of exegesis can be excised from his work and considered in isolation, that act of dismemberment disrupts the "flow" of the river of interpretation and the judicious filling of the voids where instruction is so clearly needed. In terms of his spiritual teaching, which has been my ultimate point of reference in exploring Gregory's exegesis in this essay, Gregory has created a web of interpretation, so to speak, that supports a recurring analysis of particular biblical words, phrases, and images that become symbolic keys providing an entry into reflection on the experiences of spiritual discipline in its manifold aspects.

In conclusion, I shall return to Gregory's prologue to the surviving fragment of his commentary on the Song of Songs and to his characterization there of allegory as a "machine" *(machina)* that lifts the soul nearer to God.[26] How shall we understand this machine? Perhaps a brief glance at the other appearances of the word *machina* in Gregory's writings will provide a field of reference. In the *Moralia* Gregory speaks of the "machine of compunction" and of the power of love as a machine that also lifts one up to God.[27] Finally, in the course of one of the central discussions of the

contemplative life, Gregory introduces the idea that contemplation itself is a kind of machine that lifts the mind up to behold exalted and spiritual things—only to have the mind struck with terror by what it sees and what it knows about itself.[28] These various uses suggest that we would do well to ask if allegory, too, is an experience that produces an effect, as well as a technique that results in the knowledge of spiritual things.

Is allegory only a literary fact—the evocation, or the perception, of spiritual truths in a text that speaks of earthly things? It is easy to read Gregory's construction metaphor for the three senses of Scripture in precisely that way: Allegory is the interpretive sense that builds up the knowledge of the faith, the derivative knowledge of God. But the image of the *machina* of allegory suggests something a bit different. It raises the question of whether allegory, as a machine, is an experience analogous to the experience of compunction, the pain or goad that launches a person on a spiritual itinerary. Does the machine of allegory, like the machine of compunction or the machine of love, have the power to move one, to propel one forward on the path of the spiritual quest?

Analyzing a portion of Gregory's sermon 25 on the Gospels suggests that allegory can have this propelling quality.[29] That sermon takes as its text the narrative of Mary Magdalene's return to the tomb and her meeting with the risen Jesus in the garden as recorded in John 20.11–18. Gregory begins the sermon by characterizing Mary Magdalene as a person who has turned from being immersed in sensual pleasures and love of the world to being now ardent in her love of the Lord. Through his interpretation of the Magdalene's discovery of the empty tomb, her report to the disciples John and Peter, and her anguished vigil and search for Jesus at the tomb after the others depart, Gregory creates a vivid image of passionate, even desperate, longing. Indeed, Gregory has added a new element to the interpretation of Mary's distress and her weeping. Her tears are not only tears of sorrow but also, for Gregory, the tears of a woman "inflamed with the fire of her love," for she "burned with desire for Him whom she believed had been taken away."[30]

Having presented Mary as a lover—indeed as one who loves Jesus ardently—Gregory now takes up the task of defining that love. To do so he turns to the Song of Songs. The focus shifts from history to allegory, from the narrative of the Magdalene's experience to the

allegorical/spiritual meaning of the narrative of the bride's search for her beloved in Song of Songs 3.1–5: "Upon my bed during the night I sought him whom my soul loves. I sought him and did not find him" (3.1). The link between history and allegory lies in the experience of loss/absence/search. Gregory's interpretation of the bride uses the text from the Song to define, to furnish a "peg," to fix the meaning of the Magdalene's love in a universal framework and perspective. The bride's search, interpreted allegorically, enlarges the image of love sketched historically in the Gospel and relates it to the spiritual quest. The text concerning the bride does more than provide the definition of Mary Magdalene's loving and searching: In turn the figure of the Magdalene provides a powerful example, drawn from sacred Scripture, of the realization in a human life of the spiritual journey exemplified by the symbolism of the bride's longing, searching, and finding.

Here history, allegory, and experience intersect to lift the reader to a new awareness—and experience—of the impassioned quest of the lover who seeks the one who is present yet absent. The Gospel text and the Song of Songs text are brought together in such a way that each serves to heighten the effect of the other. The Song is used to define the Magdalene's love; the figure of the Magdalene expresses, in a biblical narrative of deep personal experience sensitively and profoundly interpreted by Gregory, what might well remain an abstract notion of the spiritual quest if left as only a symbolic interpretation of the bride.[31]

Thus, we see here the interaction of multiple levels of experience and interpretation as Gregory interweaves historical narrative, an exemplary life, and the machine of allegory to produce a new awareness of reality and the spiritual quest.

NOTES

1. *Hom.Ez.* 2.2.7–15 (*CCSL* 142:22–236).

2. *Mor.* 5.29.51–66 (*CCSL* 143:253–66).

3. See, for example, *Hom.Ez.* 2.2.12 and 14 (*CCSL* 142:233.288–89, 234.320); also, *Mor.* 6.37.59 (*CCSL* 143:329.151); 23.21.42 (*CCSL* 143B: 1176.73–74).

4. Butler, *Western Mysticism,* 65–92, where Gregory's views on contemplation are presented.

5. Ibid., 65–66.

6. Ibid., 69–71, for Butler's condensation of *Hom.Ez.* 2.5.8–11. In Butler's translated version all biblical references and allegory have been stripped away. For this passage Butler does note that he is presenting Gregory's teaching "positively, detached as far as may be from the references to the Temple, and in a contracted form" (69). In another instance, however, Butler presents an extended passage (*Hom.Ez.* 2.2.12–14) without indicating that he has left anything out (66–67). Butler has, in fact, omitted the text of Isa. 6.1 that Gregory quotes and then interprets in connection with his exegesis of the verse from Ezekiel.

7. Susan Schreiner, "'Where Shall Wisdom be Found?': Gregory's Interpretation of Job," *American Benedictine Review* 39 (1988): 321–42, especially 322n.4 (quotation from Butler).

8. Paterius, *Liber testimoniorum* (*PL* 79:683–916). It is now recognized that only the text from Genesis through the Song of Songs was produced by Paterius. Two other medieval collections of extracts from the *Moralia* that deserve mention are Taio, *Sententiarum libri V* (*PL* 80:727–990); and Lathcen, *Egloga de Moralia in Iob* (*CCSL* 145).

9. Bede, *In Cantica canticorum* 6 (*CCSL* 119B:359–75). On Bede's exegesis of the Song, see Matter, *Voice*.

10. William of Saint-Thierry, *Excerpta ex libris S. Gregorii Papae super Cantica canticorum* (*PL* 180:441–74).

11. Ibid., 463A. The comment on the verse from the Song is made up of two extracts from *Mor.* 5.31.54, a passage analyzed later in this essay.

12. *Ad Leandrum* (*CCSL* 143:1–7). The reference to Scripture as a river is in *Ad Leandrum* 2, to Scripture as a meal and as a building, in 3 (all at *CCSL* 143:4).

13. "Allegoria enim animae longe a deo positae quasi quandam machinam facit, ut per illam leuetur ad deum" (*Cant.* 2; *CCSL* 144:3. 14–15).

14. Matter, *Voice,* 94.

15. "Scriptura enim sacra mons quidam est, de quo in nostris cordibus ad intelligendum dominus venit" (*Cant.* 5; *CCSL* 144:7. 93–94).

16. *Ad Leandrum* 4 (*CCSL* 143:6). There are other comparisons elsewhere; for example, see *Hom.Ez.*. 2.1.14 and 2.2.7 (*CCSL* 142:219, 229), where Scripture is likened to a measuring rod *(calamus)*.

17. *Ad Leandrum* 2 (*CCSL* 143:4.97–100).

18. Ibid., 3 (*CCSL* 143:4).

19. Ibid.

20. See note 8, above.

21. A work made up of extracts from the *Moralia* grouped under topics concerning morality (e.g., "sin," "vices," "punishment of the reprobate," "penitence," "virtues," and "the just") is the *Remediarium conversorum* of Peter of Waltham. See Peter of Waltham, *Remediarium Conversorum: A Synthesis in Latin of Moralia in Job by Gregory the Great,* ed. Joseph Gildea (Villanova, Pa., 1984). The text is translated: *Source Book of Self-discipline: A Synthesis of Moralia in Job by Gregory the Great: A Translation of Peter of Waltham's Remediarium Conversorum,* trans. Joseph Gildea (New York, 1991).

22. *Ad Leandrum* 1 (*CCSL* 143:2).

23. *Mor.* 23.25.49–26.52 (*CCSL* 143B.1181–86).

24. *Mor.* 5.31.54–32.56 (*CCSL* 143.255–59).

25. The most complete study of Gregory's thought and contemplative teaching is Dagens, *Grégoire.* See also P. Aubin, "Intériorité et extériorité dans les *Moralia in Job* de saint Grégoire le Grand," *RechSR* 62 (1974): 117–66. For Gregory's use of pairs of opposites, see Jean Leclercq, *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God,* trans. Catharine Misrahi (rev. ed.; New York, 1984), 27–36; and Straw, *Gregory,* 17–24 and 47–65.

26. See note 13, above. After this definition of allegory, Gregory comments that "by means of earthly words, it [the soul] is separated from earthly things [per terrena verba separatur a terra]."

27. For the "machine of compunction," see *Mor.* 1.34.48 (*CCSL* 143: 50.12–15): "Cum enim mens per quamdam compunctionis machinam ad alta sustollitur, omne quod ei de se ipsa, sub se ipsa est, diiudicando certius contemplatur." For the idea of the power of love as a kind of machine of the mind, see *Mor.* 6.37.58 (*CCSL* 143:328.118–19): "Machina quippe mentis est vis amoris quae hanc dum a mundo extrahit in alta sustollit."

28. *Mor.* 5.31.55 (*CCSL* 143:258.80–82): "Sed humanus animus quadam suae contemplationis machina sublevatus, quo super se altiora conspicit, eo in semetipso terribilius contremiscit."

29. *Hom.Ev.* 2.25 (*PL* 76:1188–96).

30. Ibid., 25.1 (*PL* 76:1189B–C).

31. Some of the foregoing interpretation of the Magdalene is drawn from Grover A. Zinn, Jr., "Texts within Texts: The Song of Songs in the Exegesis of Gregory the Great and Hugh of St. Victor," *Studia patristica* 25 (1993): 209–15. I also have in preparation a longer study of the use of Song of Songs texts in the writings of Gregory the Great.

10

CELIA CHAZELLE

Memory, Instruction, Worship: "Gregory's" Influence on Early Medieval Doctrines of the Artistic Image

The influence of Pope Gregory the Great reached into virtually every corner of medieval Christian thought in the West. As a result, his teachings helped shape almost the entire range of Western medieval Christian imagery, for the creators of this art moved in an intellectual environment steeped in Gregory's work. Historians and art historians who analyze the relationship of intellectual developments to medieval artistic production most often focus on only a few, relatively short writings from the vast corpus for which Gregory was responsible. These are letters in which he comments on the significance of Christian artistic images and on how Christians should relate to them, and they are the most widely cited sources in medieval Latin literature for explaining proper Christian views on those issues. Indeed, on the basis of the countless surviving medieval references to the two best known of the letters, written by Gregory to the iconoclast, Bishop Serenus of Marseilles, in 599 and 600 (= Serenus 1 and Serenus 2),[1] the justifications that Western churchmen of the Middle Ages offer for the presence of artistic depictions of Christian themes in churches have been characterized as "Gregorian" at their core. For Ernst Kitzinger, who described Gregory's letters to Serenus as the "classical expressions of the western attitude" toward religious art,[2] and for other scholars, the teachings outlined to the bishop of Marseilles encouraged later Western clergy to reject both iconoclasm and all forms of

image-worship, and they prompted a consistent emphasis on the value of images in instructing illiterate or ignorant viewers.[3]

It is not hard to understand why Gregory and particularly his letters to Serenus are so frequently invoked in later Western writings that defend Christian artistic imagery. Here was an authority of doctrine, a pope recognized as a Father of the Church, who provided, for a Latin clergy conscious of the problem of turning pagan converts away from idols, solid reasons why Christian images were useful in that task and deserved respect. While the writings of Augustine, for example, contain numerous ambivalent and sometimes overtly hostile references to artistic imagery, pagan and Christian,[4] Gregory's two letters to the bishop of Marseilles make it clear that the images that filled Christian places of worship in his own day and after should remain there, protected from iconoclastic attacks, and that the Christians who desired to preserve the images were not necessarily, for this reason, idolators.

Although Gregory is the authority to whom Latin medieval texts defending Christian images most often appeal, it is not enough simply to name him as the source of a comment on Christian imagery without also exploring precisely how his thought is used there. Thus, while it has been observed that William Durandus, for one, quotes from Serenus 2 to explain the value of images in churches, William goes on to declare, in words that have no parallel in either letter to Serenus, "we do not adore [images], nor call them gods, nor put hope of salvation in them, since that would be idolatry; but we venerate them in memory and recollection of things done in the past." Elaborating on this, William suggests that Gregory embraced essentially the same doctrine as that expressed by a poem describing an image of Christ: "Anyone who passes the effigy of Christ, honor [it] by prostrating yourself. Yet do not adore the effigy, but that which it signifies . . . For it is not God or man, the image which you presently see; but he is God and man, whom the sacred image figures."[5]

William and other medieval theologians may have derived their knowledge of Gregory from mediating sources, such as florilegia, rather than directly from his writings; but whether or not they were responsible for all the departures they make from the pope's statements, it is evident that merely to identify later comments as Gregorian, as scholars regularly do, does not tell us everything about the thinking they present. Transmitting Gregory's teachings

on images to later generations sometimes involved imparting new colors to his ideas.[6]

The range of beliefs about images with which Western medieval writers might connect Gregory's name is especially apparent in the eighth and ninth centuries. Several Latin tracts that deal with the role of Christian artistic images have survived from this period, most of them by Carolingian churchmen working outside papal circles in Rome.[7] The majority of these texts openly acknowledge Gregory as one of their sources, yet that does not mean they all set forth the same doctrines or even that those they defend necessarily come from Gregory. One of the striking characteristics of the writings to be discussed in this essay is how most of them find support in Gregory not simply for different views concerning imagery's function, but even for conflicting attitudes toward image worship. Certain texts draw on Gregory to support the view that images can be worshiped, so long as the reverence is distinguished from the adoration owed to God, but others do so to contend that all image worship must be avoided. To some extent the differing notions of the role of images and of image worship that are associated with Gregory reflect the vagueness of some of his own comments on these issues. In addition, they are indicative of the availability to early medieval churchmen, alongside authentic writings by Gregory, of a forged text attributed to him that had been prepared in Rome in the eighth century, to defend iconodulism against Byzantine iconoclasm.[8] How far Gregory could be brought to bear in supporting dissimilar doctrines of images is evidence, too, of the flexibility with which early medieval churchmen regularly handled their sources—not just Gregory but others as well—as they selected material from older texts and shaped it into their own, often quite distinctive teachings.

The writings by Gregory that are most often noted in eighth- and ninth-century Latin discussions of images, the letters to Bishop Serenus of Marseilles, accuse Serenus of destroying images, probably frescoes or mosaics, in churches in his diocese to prevent people from "adoring" them.[9] Against Serenus, Gregory insists that iconoclasm and the "adoration" of artistic representations are equally wrong. Images of holy persons should neither be destroyed nor adored, Gregory tells Serenus, but instead should be preserved for the benefits they bring to the illiterate or ignorant *(ignorantes, idiotae)*—words that Gregory, like other early medieval writers,

uses to denote people with little or no knowledge of Latin and therefore unable to learn Christian doctrine from written sources.[10] Through images, according to Gregory, such viewers gain knowledge of the stories depicted in the works of art, because they are able to "read" in the depictions what they cannot read in books.[11] As Serenus 2 also notes, sight of the images leads viewers to adore God rather than the images themselves, to imitate the virtues of the holy persons represented, and to feel a compunction that again encourages them to prostrate themselves in adoration not of the images but of the Trinity.[12]

Early medieval discussions of artistic imagery occasionally refer, as well, to a letter sent by Gregory to Bishop Januarius of Cagliari, where Gregory briefly comments on an image of Mary with Jesus and on a cross that had been forcibly placed in a synagogue, and advises Januarius that both objects should be removed "with such veneration as is deserved."[13] More often mentioned is the forgery noted above. Added to a letter sent by Gregory to the hermit Secundinus of Gaul, and first recorded in relation to the Lateran Council of 769, the forgery was most likely composed sometime in the eighth century to reinforce Roman iconodulist arguments against Byzantine iconoclasm. In the interpolation "Gregory" encourages Secundinus to contemplate a picture of Christ sent by the pope—the words indicate that the writer had in mind a small image useful for private devotion, such as an icon—because

> with every effort you seek in your heart him whose image you desire to have before your eyes, so that, every day, what your eyes see brings back to you the person depicted, so that while you gaze at the picture your soul burns for him whose image you so carefully contemplate . . . We know that you do not want an image of our savior in order to worship it as though it were a god, but in order to recall the Son of God and thus warm in love of him whose image you take care to behold. And certainly we do not prostrate ourselves before that image as if before a deity, but we adore him whom we remember through the image, at his birth or passion or seated on his throne.[14]

Gregory's letters to Serenus indicate that the pope thought Serenus's iconoclasm was directed primarily against large-scale images of Christian themes—holy persons and events—placed in

public view on church walls. The letters seek to make Serenus aware of the value of these artistic representations for leading uneducated viewers to better knowledge of Christian teachings, by arguing that the images have an impact on the uneducated similar to that of written texts on literate, educated Christians. Where the letters refer to image worship, they do so only in negative terms, through denunciations of the "adoration" of images, though it is not certain whether the term is used to express opposition only to the idolatrous worship of images in the manner owed to God, allowing for the possibility that other forms of image worship exist and are permissible, or whether it indicates opposition to the veneration of images in any sense.[15] The letters' vagueness on this issue left an important opening for later Western writers who wanted both to base their teachings on Gregory and to defend image worship.

Certain features of Gregory's comments to Serenus have no known precedents in earlier Christian writings that discuss the role of artistic images. In particular, as I have argued elsewhere, this is true of his assertions that images can be "read" by illiterate viewers just as books are read by the literate, a concept that represents Gregory's adaptation of comments by Augustine on the Christian's relationship to miracles.[16] In comparing images to books, in objecting both to iconoclasm and to idolatrous behavior toward images, and in affirming that images help teach the illiterate, however, the letters to Serenus echo the teachings of other authorities of the fifth and sixth centuries from the East and the West.[17] The interpolation, on the other hand, reflects arguments employed by seventh- and eighth-century defenders of images when it emphasizes the benefits that smaller pictures, such as icons, bring to Christians like Gregory and Secundinus who are trained in Christian doctrine. For the author of the interpolation, as for other seventh- and eighth-century iconodulist writers, these smaller images of Christian subjects can be objects of private contemplation, and they assist educated viewers to feel love for and recall already familiar prototypes. The viewer rightly bows in worship of the image or icon so long as he does not intend his reverence for the image alone, as though it were a deity, but as a means to honor God or Christ.[18]

Before turning to the Carolingian texts that discuss the role of artistic images and their worship, a few writings from eighth-century

Rome should be considered—works that deal with the same issues and, in doing so, draw on Gregory the Great. The first clear identification of Gregory as a source for a doctrine of images occurs in relation to the Lateran Council of 769, convened under Pope Stephen III to reaffirm the decisions against Greek iconoclasm of a council held in 731 under Pope Gregory III. According to Pope Hadrian I, writing to Charlemagne in 793,[19] Bishop Herulf of Langres, one of several Frankish bishops at the council of 769, had read the interpolated letter to Secundinus before the assembly as evidence of how images were properly venerated. Hadrian's letter to Charlemagne and other records of the 769 council[20] reveal that the synod, like the writer of the interpolation, distinguished image worship from the adoration owed to God, although the assembly evidently considered the term *adoration* acceptable for denoting the reverence given to images.[21] The worship paid to an image of a Christian event or holy person was recognized by the council to be an expression of the viewer's love for the image's prototype, a means to honor God, and the equivalent of the honors owed to relics of the saints, to basilicas dedicated to saints, and to the Cross.[22] The images deserved such reverence because they were holy, might work miracles or be miraculously made, led the viewer to remember and contemplate the holy beings they represented, and stirred compunction.[23]

The same letter by Hadrian, which is mainly a defense of the iconodulist Second Nicene Council (787) and a response to a list of chapter headings (the *Capitulare adversus synodum*) for the Carolingian treatise, the *Libri Carolini,* links Gregory with Roman iconodulist doctrine in other ways as well.[24] References to the letters to Serenus, for example, are used to support Hadrian's own claims that images are comparable to Scripture, that they allow the illiterate to read what they cannot read in books and help teach their viewers,[25] as well as his assertions that Gregory respected and venerated "holy images"[26] and that images, like Scripture, should be kept in memory and veneration of those depicted in them.[27] The letter to Januarius and the interpolation are also noted as evidence that Gregory believed images to deserve some form of veneration, and the interpolation alone is mentioned to defend the statement of Nicaea II, rejected in the *Capitulare,* that "through an image, which is formed with colors, his [Christ's] strength is adored and

glorified, and we will come to memory of his presence on earth."[28] The last section of Hadrian's letter brings all four Gregorian texts together—Serenus 1 and 2, the letter to Januarius, and the interpolation—to uphold the doctrines that images of the saints demonstrate love of the saints and God and are legitimately worshiped, "as Gregory taught," by being kissed and "humbly saluted [honorabilem salutationem reddere]."[29] Hadrian is careful to distinguish the veneration of images from the adoration owed to God, despite his occasional employment of the term *adoration* to describe image worship.[30] In his belief, as he notes near the end of his letter to Charlemagne, both Serenus 2 and the interpolation confirm that such worship is valid: Christians may prostrate themselves before images, not to adore them as if they were deities, but because the images inspire adoration of God.[31]

By identifying Gregory with the iconodulist response to Byzantine iconoclasm, Hadrian and the Lateran Council of 769 effectively linked him with doctrines and practices regarding images that had taken shape mainly in the East after Gregory's death and gained strength in Rome under Eastern influence. The bridge between Gregory's teachings, products of the late sixth century, and eighth-century Roman iconodulism was built partly with the interpolation to the letter to Secundinus. Added to the corpus of authentic Gregorian material, it provided a foundation in Gregory for almost every practice and doctrine relating to images that the eighth-century papacy defended against the Greek iconoclasts. In spite of the interpolation's importance to Hadrian and the 769 council, though, it is clear that Hadrian, at least, also read the letters to Januarius and Serenus through the filter of Roman iconodulist teachings. All the Gregorian texts available by the late eighth century seemed to him to reveal Gregory's agreement with the iconodulist doctrines promulgated in 731 and reaffirmed in 769,[32] as well as with those expressed in the decrees of Nicaea II: for Hadrian, Gregory, too, held that artistic depictions of Christian themes stirred love and memory and taught the ignorant, that they were holy objects deserving a worship equivalent to that given to relics and basilicas dedicated to the saints, and that this reverence was distinguishable from the adoration due to God alone and yet brought honor to God and the subjects of the images. None of Gregory's writings appeared to Hadrian to contradict these teachings. This is true even of Serenus

1 and 2, which might have been taken to reject the validity of worshiping images, but which Hadrian apparently understood only to deny that images merited the honor owed to God.

When we move from eighth-century Rome to the *Libri Carolini (LC)* completed for Charlemagne in 793, we confront a text that uses Gregory to support a doctrine of images radically different from that espoused by the council of 769 of Hadrian, one that denies the propriety of any form of image worship and narrows considerably the range of functions that images perform for Christians.[33] That the churchmen responsible for the *LC* interpreted Gregory differently from Roman iconodules already emerges from the *Capitulare,* sent to Hadrian in 790–92 while work on the *LC* was under way, which provoked the pope's letter of 793 to Charlemagne. The only reference to Gregory in the *Capitulare* that is definitely part of the list of chapters originally sent to Hadrian, and the only one that became part of the completed version of the *LC,* occurs in the heading to chapter 50, which mentions Gregory's opposition to the destruction and the adoration of images, but emphasizes his rejection of the latter, and implies that all image worship is wrong.[34] The *LC,* written primarily by Theodulf of Orléans and revised by him with the help of other theologians associated with Charlemagne,[35] quotes two passages from Serenus 2 in book 2, chapter 23, which corresponds to chapter 50 in the *Capitulare.*[36] There is no mention in the *LC* of Serenus 1 or, more important, of the letters to Januarius and Secundinus. Perhaps Theodulf and his colleagues were unaware of these texts or did not recognize their significance for assessing Gregory's doctrine of images, at least until they received Hadrian's response to the *Capitulare,* which reached Charlemagne only after the *LC* was finished.[37] But the most obvious factor behind the absence in the *LC* of any references to the letters to Secundinus and Januarius is the support they seem to offer for a cult of images, which the *LC* emphatically rejects.

Not only the choice of Gregorian material but also the teachings in Serenus 2 highlighted in the *LC* differ from what is seen in Hadrian's letter to Charlemagne. Although the passages repeated from Serenus 2 state that images teach the illiterate, the *LC* does not openly discuss this notion in its own words; instead, the focus is on Gregory's warnings that artistic depictions should not be

destroyed or adored. As in the *Capitulare,* the need to avoid the adoration of images is emphasized more than the error of destroying them, and the injunction against their adoration is associated with the concept that image worship in any sense is wrong.[38]

The Carolingians thought that Nicaea II had advocated idolatry, the bestowal on images of the adoration owed to the Trinity, when actually the Greek council, like the council of 769 and Hadrian, had distinguished between the adoration of God and the reverence paid to images. Since the *LC* rejects image worship in any form, however, and since it criticizes Nicaea II not only for its iconodulism but for also numerous other failings, it is unlikely that Theodulf and his colleagues would have accepted the decrees of Nicaea II even if they had understood them.[39] The total disapproval of image worship shown in the *LC,* the treatise's association of Gregory with this position, and the general antipathy toward images that is evident there suited the Carolingians' desire to distance themselves politically from the iconodulist government in Byzantium. The political advantages of the position that the *LC* adopts on images and on other issues, though, do not mean that Theodulf and his associates had failed to think through the theological dimensions of their attack on the Greek council. Although this is not an aspect of the *LC* that needs to be explored in depth here, it is important to reiterate a point I have argued at greater length elsewhere:[40] much of the attack on Nicaea II in the *LC* can be traced to a vision of the relationship of the material world to the spiritual that, I suspect, was grounded in Theodulf's interpretation of Augustine, possibly derived from a Spanish school of Augustinianism.[41] In the *LC,* apparently on the basis of Augustinian doctrine, the material world is perceived as something good, yet it is so completely separate from the spiritual realm that only when mortals turn away from material things can they hope to draw nearer to the spiritual or God. This conception of matter's relationship to spirit affected how Serenus 2 was employed in the *LC* as well as virtually every other element of the teachings in the *LC,* teachings that seek to demonstrate how all the many errors made by Nicaea II, not simply its defense of iconodulism, are indicative of the Greek council's failure to follow Scripture, orthodoxy, and Rome.[42]

The relationship of the material to the spiritual realm envisioned in the *LC* influenced the treatise's employment of Serenus 2

in two ways. First, it guided the interpretation of Gregory's warnings against both the destruction and the adoration of images. These statements were understood to affirm, on the one hand, that matter, represented by artistic images, is not evil and should not be rejected, as it was by the iconoclasts, and on the other hand, that the material world to which images belong exists totally separate from the spiritual sphere. God alone deserves adoration, and the saints in heaven deserve veneration, but images should never receive Christian worship.[43] For Theodulf and his colleagues, the material object can have no spiritual dimension unless it is specially consecrated by God, a blessing that will be revealed in Scripture, the word of God that records all sacred truth. The Bible never indicates images to be consecrated things, and so they must be nothing more than material objects, produced by mortal, fallible craftsmen, with no connection whatsoever to the invisible, spiritual things of heaven.[44]

Second, the separation that the *LC* posits between the material world and the spiritual affected the treatise's handling of Gregory's advice to Serenus that images are comparable to books and teach the illiterate. Although these concepts are expressed in the passages quoted from Gregory in *LC* 2.23, they are not reiterated or reaffirmed when Theodulf and his associates comment on the passages in their own words, nor are they mentioned at other points in the *LC* where the benefits of images are discussed. Indeed, rather than defending the ability of images to teach or the parallel they present to books, *LC* 2.23 implies that Serenus 2 supports the belief, upheld elsewhere in the *LC,* that images are useful only as decoration and as an aid to memory of the past.[45]

The approach to these aspects of Gregory's teachings is ambiguous, then, and for us to understand why, we must keep in mind a few further elements of the *LC* that grow out of its conception of the relationship between the material and spiritual realms. As other portions of the *LC* indicate, Theodulf and his associates saw images as objects divorced from the spiritual not only because they are fabricated from matter but also because, as material *likenesses,* they necessarily recall their subjects only to the extent that they resemble those persons or things—and consequently only insofar as the images' subjects, too, are material. An artist can never depict something spiritual, and therefore artistic images are unable to

reveal anything to the viewer's eyes of the spiritual world.[46] This means that the image is inferior to the written word as a means of communication. Although writing is also a material creation, for Theodulf and his colleagues it operates as a system of signs that designate things, which the written letters and words do not have to resemble, and which therefore can encompass spiritual things.[47] God's choice to have his word recorded in writing rather than in painting is evidence of the superiority of the written word over the image as an instrument of communication; out of all written texts, Christians should turn especially to the Bible for insight into the spiritual realm. Blessed by God, Scripture is one of the few things that do exist on both a spiritual and a material level, and Christians who read the Bible or hear it read can gain insight into the vast treasure of wisdom revealed through a spiritual as well as a literal (that is, material) interpretation of its contents.[48]

To say that images serve as decoration and as reminders of the past conforms with this conception of their total imprisonment in the material realm. Something that is decorative is appreciated for its aesthetic value—for the quality of its components and the skill of its execution—and therefore for its material features. If what the image recalls is part of the past, that subject, like the image itself, necessarily lies within the temporal, material sphere. Like Gregory, the *LC* recognizes that images are particularly useful to viewers with little education in Christian doctrine, such as recent converts from paganism. The Carolingian treatise suggests that the faith of such people can be strengthened by artistic representations, because the images make them more aware of holy figures and events, and also because, unlike more "mature" Christians, the new converts may not yet be ready to take the final steps away from dependency on the material world that they must take in order to grasp the things revealed through attention to Scripture's hidden, spiritual meaning.[49] Yet it probably would have been difficult for Theodulf and his colleagues to give as much weight to the parallel that Gregory drew between images and books, or to the notion that images teach the illiterate, as they did to the doctrine that images are decorative and recall the past. Given the separation between the materiality of images and the spiritual sphere, envisioned in the *LC*, books—written words—are clearly superior to artistic representations, and whatever information the image imparts to its viewer has

nothing to do with the unseen, spiritual realm revealed in Scripture, which should be the main focus of Christian study.

As Ann Freeman has observed, the *LC* never circulated widely after its completion, no doubt partly because of the discrepancy that Hadrian's letter to Charlemagne revealed between the pope's attitude toward Nicaea II and that espoused in the *LC*.[50] The length of the *LC*—228 pages in the current printed edition—may also have been a factor, since this must have made copying difficult.[51] Both circumstances likely explain why only two copies of the *LC* are known to have been produced in the ninth century[52] and why, even though a few other extant Carolingian writings on images espouse some doctrines similar to those of the *LC*, there is little if any evidence that the *LC* directly influenced later Carolingian thought. When later Carolingian writers turn to Gregory to defend their views on the role of images and on image worship, they tend to use him differently than the *LC* does, sometimes to the extent that their interpretations of his teachings fall closer to what is seen in Hadrian's letter to Charlemagne. Moreover, just as none of the later Carolingian writings presents doctrines that exactly mirror those found in the *LC*, no two of these texts express exactly the same thoughts. Certain themes and beliefs regarding images emerge in most (though not all) of them, above all the doctrine that artistic representations should neither be destroyed nor adored, yet otherwise there is considerable variation in the understanding they demonstrate of the functions that images perform for Christians and of how Christians should approach images.

The first extant, clearly datable Carolingian texts dealing with the role of images that postdate the *LC* are the documents produced in relation to the Synod of Paris (825).[53] The synod, possibly only a small assembly,[54] was convened to respond to a letter from the Byzantine emperors Michael and Theophilus, who were moderate iconoclasts, asking Louis the Pious to aid their campaign against iconodulism. The letter notes that the Greek emperors had ordered the removal of images from the lower portions of church walls in order to prevent the faithful from worshiping them, while permitting images higher on the walls because they served there as a form of "Scripture."[55]

The response of the Synod of Paris was initially outlined in a libellus prepared for Louis.[56] In certain respects the position taken

in the libellus resembles that of the *LC:* both iconoclasm and Byzantine iconodulism are rejected; the latter error is associated with the adoration of images in the sense owed to God; Nicaea II is attacked for supposedly having advocated such behavior; and overall, less interest is shown in condemning iconoclasm than in denouncing the beliefs that the Carolingians linked with the Greek iconodules.[57] The libellus differs from the *LC* in its much greater emphasis on imagery's usefulness to Christians and its greater tolerance of image worship—differences that are linked with a different approach to Gregory. Selections from the letters to Januarius, Secundinus, and Serenus are quoted three times in the libellus, twice on the grounds that they provide evidence of what constitutes "discretion" *(discretio)* in the use of images. Although a precise definition of that term is not offered, the libellus suggests that its meaning is to be found particularly in Serenus 2, where it is connected with Gregory's doctrine that images should be neither destroyed nor adored: discretion means the avoidance of both errors.[58] The *LC,* too, makes this doctrine central to its teachings, yet the range of functions for images that is understood to fall between the two extremes of adoration and destruction is significantly larger in the libellus. The *LC* recognizes only imagery's ability to serve as decoration and to remind viewers of the past, but the libellus acknowledges that images decorate the places in which they appear, stir compunction, teach the ignorant, and (with an appeal to Gregory) encourage love as well as memory of the saints.[59]

Furthermore, turning to Gregory for support, the libellus asserts that the worship it condemns as the "adoration" of images consists of "undeserved" or "unfitting" forms of reverence *(indebitus cultus, superfluus cultus),*[60] implying that "deserved" veneration also exists. The libellus makes clear the council's beliefs that artistic representations have no inherent sanctity, cannot help the Christian approach heaven, and can be ignored without harming the Christian's soul,[61] and that no action should be performed for idolatrous purposes, such that the image is honored for its own sake as though it were a god; the last notion seems to underlie the disapproval expressed for the placing of incense and lights before images.[62] Images (by which is meant here artistic representations other than crosses) are therefore very different from the Cross and crosses, which are praised in the libellus as divinely consecrated

objects filled with sacred power[63] that deserve "veneration," "exaltation," and "adoration," in an echo of the major liturgical rites in honor of the Cross.[64]

There is no direct admission that artistic imagery other than crosses should be revered. Nevertheless, the synod's willingness to accept reverential actions before images—actions presumably understood to differ from the "veneration, exaltation, and adoration" owed to crosses—and its conviction that this accorded with Gregory's teachings become evident from the testimonia of earlier authorities offered in the second half of the libellus to illustrate acceptable beliefs and actions involving works of art. These texts, as the introduction to this portion of the libellus states, demonstrate that images should be neither loved nor condemned "beyond what is fitting."[65] The section opens with excerpts from the letters to Serenus, Januarius, and Secundinus.[66] A few testimonia by authorities other than Gregory suggest that images lack holiness, dwelling on the need to adore God alone;[67] others deal mainly with the Cross, crosses, and their sanctity.[68] The majority of the sources quoted in the second half of the libellus, though—some of them originally written in Greek—contain positive references to Christian artistic depictions, their merits, and the respect Christians should show them. Some of the passages call upon Christians to "worship" and "adore" Christ, Mary, and the saints through their images; admit that true "adoration" is owed to God, but that the word can denote honors properly paid to creatures; and distinguish the worship legitimately paid to images from that rendered to God.[69]

The Synod of Paris probably would not have included this section in its libellus unless the participants had generally agreed that images may receive some veneration, even though the council insisted that its position had no connection with the one promulgated by Nicaea II and supported by Hadrian I.[70] Such a position on image worship is implied, too, by a passage near the end of the libellus discussing the letter to Secundinus. Despite "Gregory's" claim in the interpolation that he does not worship an image of Christ as if it were a separate deity, but rather adores Christ, whom sight of the image brings him to remember, the synod apparently believed that the text came dangerously close to implying that images should receive the adoration that God deserves and thus to contradicting Gregory's advice to Serenus. The synod endeavors to explain

away the perceived contradiction by drawing an analogy between the behavior described in the interpolation and a subject's behavior before his king. The subject does not prostrate himself before the king as if the monarch were a god, the libellus argues, but rather he adores Jesus, whom sight of the king brings to mind, since Jesus possesses a human nature and since the enthroned ruler "imitates" the enthroned Christ in heaven.[71] The implication is that Christians may prostrate themselves before images, not to adore the images themselves but to express their reverence for the heavenly beings (Christ, the angels, the saints) represented in them.

It is possible, for several reasons, that theologians under Charlemagne and Louis the Pious may have disagreed less about image worship than the *LC* and the libellus would suggest. For one, while the *LC* was written against an iconodulist government in Byzantium, the Synod of Paris faced a Greek policy of iconoclasm.[72] The more flexible and tolerant attitudes toward images and their worship found in the libellus may stem in part from a perception in 825 that iconodulism was a less immediate threat than the iconoclastic policies of Michael and Theophilus. In addition, the libellus is mainly a hastily compiled collection of testimonia from different authorities.[73] Neither it nor the epitome that Jonas of Orléans and Jeremiah of Sens later made from the libellus to convey the synod's decisions to Pope Eugenius II[74] is a formal treatise, unlike the *LC,* where scriptural passages and references to patristic sources are integrated into a carefully organized and thorough critique of iconoclasm, of the iconodulism of Nicaea II, of major aspects of the Byzantine imperial government's claims to authority, and of still other failings attributed to the Eastern Empire. It is no wonder, then, that the writings of the 825 synod show no trace of the driving effort seen in the *LC* to make every argument conform to a single, rigid principle regarding the relationship of matter to spirit. The desire to bring each element of the *LC's* teachings into line with this one principle may have encouraged Theodulf and his colleagues to express stricter opposition to image worship and to deemphasize the value of artistic imagery beyond what they might have done under other circumstances. And finally, it must be remembered that the *LC* is primarily Theodulf's work: the treatise's doctrines may represent chiefly his views, and other Carolingian theologians at the time may have held quite different beliefs

about the role of images and their worship, perhaps ones similar to those in the libellus.

At least under Charlemagne's successors, other Carolingian writings reveal the existence of a range of different attitudes toward artistic depictions and particularly toward their worship. These diverse views are regularly defended by appeal to Gregory I. Among the most radical teachings on image worship recorded in any Carolingian text—though apparently not based on Gregory—are those in the surviving fragments of a treatise written by Bishop Claudius of Turin between 824 and his death in c. 827, answering questions raised about his orthodoxy by Abbot Theutmir of Psalmody (Nîmes).[75] Claudius states that he had been appalled, on arriving in Turin in 817, to find that the city's churches were filled with "filthy images" and that Christians engaged in their "worship" *(colere)*—a sign, perhaps, that before his arrival the clergy of Turin had allowed practices before images similar to those the Paris synod appears to have tolerated.[76] The letter against Theutmir defends Claudius's destruction of the images on the grounds that artistic depictions must not receive any manner of worship; it also rejects crosses, asserts that pilgrimages to Rome and the cult of relics have no sacral value and that the saints cannot intercede with God after their deaths, and appears to scorn Rome and papal authority.[77] Claudius's disapproval of images—not merely of their worship but of their presence in churches altogether—is suggested to be based first on a very strict interpretation of the Second Commandment and second—underlying his negative attitude toward crosses, relics, and pilgrimages—on a denial of any spiritual worth to the material world.[78] His antipathy toward the material sphere may have extended even to Christ's human weakness and suffering, as suggested by the claim against Theutmir that, like unbelievers, worshipers of crosses find pleasing in Christ only "the shame of the passion and the mockery of [his] death."[79]

Claudius's comments against Theutmir depart from the *LC* both because the *LC* forbids iconoclasm and because Theodulf and his associates stressed the sanctity of the Cross and relics and the veneration of the saints.[80] The two documents share, however, the assumption of a sharp separation between the material and spiritual worlds. The surviving portions of Claudius's text are too brief to allow us much insight into the theological underpinnings of its dual-

ism, but since Claudius was from Spain,[81] as was Theodulf, one factor may have been a similar interpretation of Augustine, rooted again perhaps in Spanish traditions.[82] As far as Gregory is concerned, there is no reference to him in the extant portions of Claudius's work, possibly because of the fragmentary state in which it has survived, although it does seem likely that Claudius would have considered Greogry's thought incompatible with his own iconoclasm.

According to both Claudius and Dungal the Scot, writing in 827, news of Claudius's teachings spread throughout the Carolingian Empire, and Dungal claims that support for Claudius was widely found.[83] That Claudius did not stand alone in at least some of his beliefs is also indicated by the tract attacking the cult of images—chiefly a patristic florilegium—by Agobard of Lyons,[84] perhaps a contribution to the Paris synod's effort to gather sources relating to the function and worship of artistic representations.[85] The treatise includes a passage from Bede asserting that artistic representations help illiterate viewers and are comparable to books, and Agobard comments in his own words on imagery's value for recalling the past and for stirring love of the holy persons depicted.[86] Although he does not actually quote from Gregory, he claims that Gregory reproved the bishop of Frejus (evidently meaning Serenus) for destroying images "of the apostles" after he found people adoring them, when he should have kept them for later generations as reminders of the persons they represent.[87]

Most of Agobard's treatise focuses on his opposition to image worship, and here he leaves no doubt that he considered any such acts unacceptable. His attitude seems to rest on a rigid dualism that may reflect the same Spanish Augustinianism possibly behind the dualism of the *LC* and Claudius. Agobard, too, was of Spanish origin,[88] and the vast majority of the sources quoted in his treatise are passages from Augustine, carefully arranged with texts by a few other authorities, such as Gregory (from writings other than his letters on images), to convey the doctrines that the material world exists completely divorced from the spiritual, that there is therefore nothing holy about images, and that to turn to images, things rooted in the material sphere, is to turn away from spiritual things.[89] Images are worthless in the Christian's quest to approach God; any reverence shown to them is idolatrous, even when the worshiper inwardly intends to honor Christ or the saints in heaven.

Consequently, following the Council of Elvira (305), it is better to do without images in churches entirely than risk that they be revered.[90] Agobard apparently did not perceive the conflict—or chose to ignore it—between this position and his reference to Gregory's letters to Serenus. After citing Gregory he goes on to remark, recalling Claudius's policy, that if people venerate images of the saints the images should be destroyed. The depictions are purely human creations that God never ordered to be made, Agobard declares by way of explanation,[91] but his call for the destruction of the works of art is also tied to his belief that the veneration of Christian images is always, by definition, idolatrous. Images that are revered are no better than pagan idols.[92]

No other Carolingian writing that openly supports iconoclasm appears to have survived, although Dungal's comment on the popularity of Claudius's attitudes may be a sign that others were written. Still, some ninth-century Carolingian theologians disagreed in other ways with the position enunciated at the Synod of Paris. Among them were Jeremiah of Sens and Jonas of Orléans, who attended the synod and prepared the epitome of its libellus.[93] The epitome follows the organization of the libellus and draws its sources from there, but the choice made from those sources and the comments added by Jonas and Jeremiah demonstrate that these two bishops held a different conception of proper Christian behavior toward images than that which the libellus suggests represented the consensus of the whole synod. The epitome agrees with the libellus in affirming the Carolingians' opposition both to the destruction of images and to their adoration or "undue worship."[94] Images are valuable because they show Christians' love and respect for the saints, aid memory, and are decorative,[95] it is stated. Yet, like the libellus, the epitome denies that images possess sanctity or that incense or lights should be placed before them,[96] and it insists that they are vastly inferior to the Cross.[97] The position taken in the epitome is declared to be grounded on Pope Gregory I, the spokesman of discretion and Eugenius's outstanding predecessor.[98] But the epitome recalls the *LC* more than the libellus. First, the only writings by Gregory quoted are excerpts from the letters to Serenus;[99] the letters to Januarius and Secundinus are not mentioned, even though these texts were in the libellus, from which Jonas and Jeremiah selected their own sources.[100] Second, like the

LC, the epitome avoids any hint that some acts of image worship are distinguishable from the "adoration" owed to God alone and are therefore acceptable. The implication throughout the epitome is that image worship in any sense should be opposed, a position clearly easier to link with Gregory when references to the letters to Januarius and Secundinus are avoided.

Jonas's opposition to image worship is also evident from his attack on Claudius of Turin. Although Jonas had not finished his treatise when Claudius died, he started to write again after the death in 840 of Louis the Pious because, Jonas contended, supporters of Claudius had resurfaced and the ideas about images they embraced—Claudius's teachings—were related to Arianism and Spanish Adoptionism.[101] Jonas holds that his own doctrine of images conforms with that expressed in Gregory's letters to Serenus, which he cites near the beginning of his treatise as evidence that images have traditionally been kept in churches and should not be adored or destroyed but rather should be preserved "only to instruct ignorant minds [solummodo ad instruendas nescientium mentes]."[102] Contrary to Claudius's belief, Jonas asserts, the Second Commandment does not forbid all artistic imagery but only images that receive the *cultus* and adoration owed to God. Just as God permitted the cherubim in the tabernacle and the decorations in Solomon's temple, he allows Christian images to be placed in churches as decoration and to evoke memories of the past.[103] Yet although Christians who "pray to images of the saints out of respect for them and in excessive and indiscreet love" are not necessarily idolators, their prayers to or worship of the images are still wrong.[104] As in the epitome and the *LC,* Gregory's injunction against the adoration of images is understood to encompass all forms of image worship. Hence, Jonas adamantly opposes the concept, to which Claudius, too, objects, but which recalls some of the testimonia quoted in the libellus that Christians may "adore" an image with "veneration" and "in honor" of the holy person depicted. Such actions, Jonas insists, give to a "weak and worthless *simulacrum* the honor owed to the Divinity" and so represent the same sin committed by "certain Greeks."[105] In this light, it is understandable that Jonas's treatise does not mention the letter to Secundinus, despite his familiarity with it from the Synod of Paris. His disapproval of image worship also illumines his one reference

to Gregory's letter to Januarius: Jonas quotes the passage in the letter where Gregory urges Januarius to remove, "with such veneration as is deserved," the image of Mary with Jesus and the cross placed in the synagogue; but he remarks solely on the respect owed to crosses, not on what the letter might imply concerning proper behavior toward images of Mary or Christ.[106]

Claudius, Agobard, Jonas, and Jeremiah disagree on what the clergy should do about image worship when they find the practice occurring, but they agree in believing that the worship of images in any sense must be opposed. This is probably why, unlike the Paris synod in its libellus, none of them links his doctrine of images with the letter to Januarius or mentions the interpolated version of the letter to Secundinus.

One Carolingian text that expresses, much more clearly than the libellus of 825, a favorable view of image worship is Dungal's tract against Claudius. Dungal maintains that he opposes both those who think that a part of creation deserves the reverence owed to God—thus he rejects, for example, the offering of sacrifices to any creature[107]—and those who would destroy something made "in God's honor," such as an image of a saint. He identifies his position with the teachings of the Synod of Paris and of Serenus 2, from which he quotes a passage,[108] and he probably has both that letter and the synod's decisions in mind when he suggests that images should be preserved because they "offer almost as much to erudition as do sacred letters."[109] The Second Commandment does not outlaw all artistic imagery, Dungal contends; such objects mentioned in the Old Testament as the Ark's cherubim and the brazen serpent show God's acceptance of images made "to his honor,"[110] and artistic images of Christian themes similarly honor God by assisting memory and love of the heavenly beings they depict.[111] More interesting, however, is a statement implying that Christians properly pray before images of the saints to gain the saints' intercession,[112] as well as Dungal's assertions that "holy pictures" should be venerated just like crosses and relics. Although none of these objects deserves the worship given to God, all are properly revered or venerated "in God and on God's behalf . . . so that they are honored and embraced in love, honor, praise of him and in his glory, as separate, holy, and venerable signs and vessels, as it is appropriate . . . with saving and not false faith."[113]

The libellus of the synod of 825 only tacitly admits that images may be worshiped, and it insists on the inferiority of images to crosses, while Dungal openly defends the veneration of images and implies that images have equivalent sanctity to crosses and relics, such that all these objects are equally "holy and venerable signs and vessels." Yet like the Synod of Paris, Dungal apparently saw no contradiction between his teachings and those of Gregory. Although he does not refer to Gregory's letters to Januarius or to Secundinus, he seems to have thought that his beliefs about images were compatible with the excerpt he does quote from Serenus 2. For Dungal, when Gregory rejected the adoration of images he meant to condemn only the bestowal on them of the adoration owed to God, while recognizing the existence of other, legitimate forms of image worship.

The chapter on images in Walafrid Strabo's *De exordiis,* written in the early 840s,[114] around the time that Jonas probably completed his tract against Claudius, does not mention Gregory directly, but it deserves notice because it again upholds a relatively positive doctrine of image worship. Claiming to reflect the decisions of the Roman council of 731 (reaffirmed in 769) and of the synod of 825,[115] the chapter attacks proponents of iconoclasm, including Claudius,[116] in part on the grounds that the Old Testament accounts of the tabernacle and temple show that the Second Commandment was not intended to outlaw all artistic depictions.[117] Any irreverence demonstrated toward Christian artistic images redounds to the injury of the persons depicted there,[118] Walafrid declares; such depictions are beneficial because they provide a manner of writing for the illiterate, stir memory and love for their subjects,[119] and arouse feelings of compunction, so that viewers show through their tears that the figures represented in the images "are impressed on their hearts."[120] Although it is wrong, according to Walafrid, to give "immoderate worship" *(cultus immoderatus)* or "spiritual worship" *(spiritalis cultus)* to images and other corporal things, or to revere them in the manner owed to God,[121] artistic representations can be shown "honest and moderate honors [honesti et moderati imaginum honores]"[122]—though precisely what such honors entail is not explained.

Finally, the *Opusculum LV capitulorum,* written by Hincmar of Reims against Hincmar of Laon in 869–70, should be mentioned,

because Hincmar of Rheims again thought that his comments there on the function of images and on image worship accorded with Gregory's teachings.[123] Earlier in the treatise Hincmar quotes a passage from the *LC* discussing the nature of an ecumenical council,[124] and we know that he had a copy of the *LC* made for himself,[125] yet there is little evidence that the *LC* directly influenced his thinking about images. Like the *LC* and the libellus of 825, Hincmar's *Opusculum* condemns Nicaea II, calling it a "pseudosynod" held "without the authority of the apostolic see,"[126] where those who wanted to destroy images battled those who said that images must be adored.[127] The orthodox position, he states, was rather the one announced in the letters to Secundinus and Serenus, where those are reprehended

> who with the excuse that [images] should not be adored say that they must be destroyed, and those [are praised] who establish that [the images] must neither be adored nor destroyed but set up only for instructing ignorant minds; since one ought to prostrate oneself humbly in adoration solely of the omnipotent holy Trinity, and if anyone wishes to make images of God [i.e., Christ] and the saints for the purpose of instruction he should not in any way be prohibited from having them.[128]

Hincmar goes on to suggest that images of the saints, just like the saints' words, assist knowledge of their subjects[129]—a very different view of the relationship between words and images from that found in the *LC*, but one in keeping with Gregory's comparison of images to books and with Hincmar's clear affirmation that images teach the ignorant. While Hincmar's attitude toward image worship is uncertain, the approving manner in which he cites the letter to Secundinus probably indicates some acceptance of the practice. This is also implied by Flodoard's comment, in his *Historia ecclesiae Remensis*, that Hincmar had written a treatise (now lost) on "how images of our savior and his saints should be venerated [qualiter imagines Salvatoris nostri, vel sanctorum ipsius venerandae sint]."[130]

Modern scholarship tends to refer to Western attitudes toward images as though a single doctrine of the artistic representation runs in a straight line from Gregory the Great to Bernard of Clairvaux and beyond—one involving, in Gregory as in later medieval

writers, a consistent emphasis on imagery's didactic value and a consistent effort to repress all worship of artistic depictions. Such attitudes were indeed strong in this period. Yet in the Carolingian realm and empire, particularly if we take Rome into account, we find that doctrines of images also could move in quite different directions, as Latin theologians selected texts by Gregory and other authorities, focused on certain "Gregorian" doctrines at the expense of others, and interpreted all their sources in different ways, even as they regularly claimed to base their teachings on Gregory's. The doctrine enunciated by Gregory that is most often mentioned in writings from the eighth- and ninth-century West, a concept clearly accepted by the majority of the theologians I have discussed here—by all of them except Claudius and Agobard—is that Christian images should neither be adored like God nor destroyed. Within this somewhat vague framework, though, the beliefs about the role of images and about image worship affirmed in the same writings represent varying developments on Gregory's thought, ones sometimes clearly influenced by other concerns and sources, while the positions expressed by writers like Agobard and Claudius perhaps reveal an equally deliberate rejection of some of Gregory's doctrines. Latin theologians frequently disagreed not only in their assessments of what constituted "Gregorian" thought on images but also in their broader judgments of how Christians should approach artistic representations. They were evidently willing to allow a certain amount of disagreement to exist. Only when a churchman such as Claudius *actively* followed a policy departing from the principle that images deserve neither destruction nor adoration—so that he went beyond the defense of iconoclasm to the actual destruction of Christian artistic images—did formal proceedings against him begin. But it should be noted that there is no certainty that these proceedings would have started if Claudius had not also rejected crosses; opposed the cult of relics, pilgrimages, and belief in the intercession of the saints; and possibly questioned papal authority.

It is an error to assume the existence in the eighth- and ninth-century West of a single, well-defined doctrine of the artistic image. Likewise, we would be wrong to assume that a description of teachings on images from this period as "Gregorian" is synonymous with declaring that they represent a single theory of art.

These errors perhaps reveal the need to reconsider, for other centuries of the Middle Ages as well, the extent to which the Western attitude toward Christian artistic imagery was monolithic. They also underscore a point to which Richard Sullivan has drawn attention: the importance of reexamining the traditional scholarly view of the Carolingian period as one in which the intellectual elite sought to create a society ruled by the principle of uniformity, and in this way to effect a "universal" and "unified" intellectual and cultural order in Carolingian regions.[131] As Sullivan has shown, much recent scholarship on the Carolingians calls this assessment of that era into question. A growing body of studies of social, intellectual, and artistic developments in Carolingian Europe has demonstrated the diversity, dissent, and tolerance for dissent found in numerous areas of intellectual and cultural activity, suggesting that Carolingian thought and culture were marked less by uniformity than by plurality.[132] From this perspective, the dissimilar views about Christian images, their role, and worship of them preached by Carolingian clergy by no means represent an exception to a normal search for unity. Rather, they reflect the creative energy, richness, and complexity of Carolingian society and culture as a whole, a complexity to which knowledge of the writings on images ascribed, correctly or incorrectly, to Gregory the Great contributed.

NOTES

My thanks to the University of Notre Dame, Department of Theology, and particularly to John Cavadini and Robert Markus, for the opportunity to present a version of this paper at their symposium on Gregory the Great. My thinking about Gregory has profited from the stellar work on the sixth-century pope by Robert Markus and other conference participants, espcially Markus's *End of Ancient Christianity* and Carole Straw's *Gregory the Great: Perfection in Imperfection.*

1. *Ep.* 9.209 (*CCSL* 140A:768); 11.10 (*CCSL* 140A:873–76). I have analyzed these letters in Celia Chazelle, "Pictures, Books, and the Illiterate: Pope Gregory I's Letters to Serenus of Marseilles," *Word and Image* 6 (1990): 138–53. For surveys of the numerous medieval references to the letters to Serenus, in particular to their assertions that images help teach the illiterate, see Lawrence G. Duggan, "Was Art Really the 'Book of the Illiterate'?" *Word and Image* 5 (1989): 227–51;

and the earlier work by L. Gougaud, "Muta praedicatio," *RvBén* 42 (1930): 168–71.

2. Ernst Kitzinger, "The Cult of Icons in the Age before Iconoclasm," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 8 (1954): 83–150, at 132.

3. As a few examples, Gerhart B. Ladner, "Origin and Significance of the Byzantine Iconoclastic Controversy," *Medieval Studies* 2 (1940): 127–49, at 147 and n. 116; William R. Jones, "Art and Christian Piety: Iconoclasm in Medieval Europe," in *The Image and the Word: Confrontations in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam,* ed. Joseph Gutmann (Missoula, 1977), 75–105, at 78; Michael Camille, "Seeing and Reading: Some Visual Implications of Medieval Literacy and Illiteracy," *Art History* 8 (1985): 26–49, at 26; Conrad Rudolph, *The "Things of Greater Importance": Bernard of Clairvaux's Apologia and the Medieval Attitude toward Art* (Philadelphia, 1990), 50–51. Cf. Duggan, "Art," 240–43.

4. E.g., pictures and statues "must be counted among the superfluous institutions of men" (Augustine, *De doctrina Christiana* 2.25.39; *CCSL* 32:61). Other passages can be found (translated) in Caecilia Davis-Weyer, *Early Medieval Art, 300–1150* (Toronto, 1986), 40–44.

5. William Durandus, *Rationale divinorum officiorum* 1.3; Gregory, *Ep.* 11.10 (*CCSL* 140A:874). Partially translated in Elizabeth G. Holt, *A Documentary History of Art,* 2 vols. (Garden City, N.Y., 1957), 1:121, using the translation by J. M. Neale and B. Webb, *The Symbolism of Churches and Church Ornaments* (Leeds, 1843; reprint, New York, 1973), 53. Duggan, "Art," 231–32, notes the problems in identifying William's thought with that of Gregory.

6. Cf. Duggan, "Art," 230–40, on the post-Carolingian period.

7. I will not discuss Bede's comments on this topic, since he does not directly tie his remarks to Gregory and it is unclear that Gregory was a source for them: Paul Meyvaert, "Bede and the Church Paintings at Wearmouth-Jarrow," *Anglo-Saxon England* 8 (1979): 63–77; Duggan, "Art," 229–30. Cf. Paul Meyvaert, "The *Registrum* of Gregory the Great and Bede," *RvBén* 80 (1970): 162–66 (reprinted in Meyvaert, *Benedict,* as no. XI).

8. *Registrum, Appendix,* 10 (*CCSL* 140A:1104–11; 1104 on the mss. containing the interpolation, and 1110–11).

9. *Ep.* 9.209 (*CCSL* 140A:768); 11.10 (*CCSL* 140A:873–75).

10. Chazelle, "Pictures," 142, and n. 19, with references to earlier scholarly literature.

11. E.g., *Ep.* 9.209 (*CCSL* 140A:768.8–14): "Praeterea indico dudum ad nos peruenisse quod fraternitas uestra quosdam imaginum adoratores aspiciens easdem ecclesiis imagines confregit atque proiecit. Et

quidem zelum uos, ne quid manufactum adorari possit, habuisse laudauimus, sed frangere easdem imagines non debuisse iudicamus. Idcirco enim pictura in ecclesiis adhibetur, ut hi qui litteras nesciunt saltem in parietibus uidendo legant, quae legere in codicibus non ualent." And *Ep.* 11.10 (*CCSL* 140A:873.17–74.19, 21–26, 29–31): "Et quidem quia eas [imagines] adorari uetuisses omnino laudauimus, fregisse uero reprehendimus . . . Aliud est enim picturam adorare, aliud per picturae historiam quid sit adorandum addiscere. Nam quod legentibus scriptura, hoc idiotis praestat pictura cernentibus, quia in ipsa ignorantes uident quod sequi debeant, in ipsa legunt qui litteras nesciunt; unde praecipue gentibus pro lectione pictura est . . . Frangi ergo non debuit quod non ad adorandum in ecclesiis sed ad instruendas solummodo mentes fuit nescientium collocatum."

12. As above, note 11; and *Ep.* 11.10 9 (*CCSL* 140A:875.52–62): "Si ad hanc instructionem, ad quam imagines antiquitus factae sunt, habere uultis in ecclesia, eas modis omnibus et fieri et haberi permitto. Atque indica quod non tibi ipsa uisio historiae, quae pictura teste pandebatur, displicuerit sed illa adoratio, quae picturis fuerat incompetenter exhibita. Atque in his uerbis eorum mentes demulcens eos ad concordiam tuam reuoca. Et si quis imagines facere uoluerit, minime prohibe, adorare uero imagines omnimodis deuita. Sed hoc sollicite fraternitas tua admoneat ut ex uisione rei gestae ardorem compunctionis percipiant et in adoratione solius omnipotentis sanctae trinitatis humiliter prosternantur."

13. "[S]ublata exinde cum ea qua dignum est ueneratione imagine atque cruce, debeatis quod uiolenter ablatum est reformare" (*Ep.* 9.196; *CCSL* 140A:750–52).

14. *Registrum, Appendix,* 1110–11.

15. See Chazelle, "Pictures," 141, on the types of images that concerned Gregory, and 143–44 on Gregory's use of the term "adoration" *(adoratio, adorare).*

16. Ibid., especially 146–47.

17. Ibid., 144–47.

18. E.g., the acts of Nicaea II (787), citing Leontius of Neapolis (d. c. 650), John of Salonica (first half seventh century), and John Damascene (d. c. 749): Mansi, 13.43–54, 164–67, 357–58. Also the anonymous seventh-century Armenian apology for images: Sirarpie Der Nersessian, "Une apologie des images du septième siècle," *Byzantion* 17 (1944–45): 58–87, at 58–69. See also Kitzinger, "The Cult of Icons," passim; Norman H. Baynes, "The Icons before Iconoclasm," *Harvard Theological Review* 44 (1951): 93–106; Leslie Barnard, "The Theology of Images," in *Iconoclasm: Papers Given at the Ninth Spring Sympo-*

sium of Byzantine Studies, University of Birmingham, March 1975, ed. A. Bryer and J. Herrin (Birmingham, 1977), 7–13.

19. Hadrian, *Ep.* 2.5–57, at 20 (*MGH, Epistolae,* 5); *Concilium Romanum. 769, MGH, Concilia,* 2.1, 89–90. On the date of Hadrian's letter, see Ann Freeman, "Carolingian Orthodoxy and the Fate of the *Libri Carolini,*" *Viator* 16 (1985): 65–108, at 90.

20. *Conc. Rom.* 74–92.

21. *Conc. Rom.* 87; Hadrian, *Ep.* 2.19–20.

22. *Conc. Rom.* 87.

23. *Conc. Rom.* 89–92, cf. 77.29–38; Hadrian, *Ep.* 2.11, 15–16, 19–20, 23, 27–28, 32–33, 36, 41, 46, 47, 54.

24. Hadrian, *Ep.* 2.5–57. I omit here Hadrian's letter to Irene and Constantine VI, inserted into the acts of Nicaea II. Its complicated manuscript transmission makes it difficult to know precisely what the original said about Gregory: Luitpold Wallach, "The Greek and Latin Versions of II Nicaea, 787, and the *Synodica* of Hadrian I (*JE* 2448)," in *Diplomatic Studies in Latin and Greek Documents from the Carolingian Age* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1977) 3–26, esp. 13–14; Wallach, "The Testimonia of Image-Worship in Hadrian I's *Synodica* of 785 (*JE* 2448)," in ibid., 27–42.

25. Hadrian, *Ep.* 2.48; cf. 2.42–43, 55–56.

26. Hadrian, *Ep.* 2.37.

27. Hadrian, *Ep.* 2.42–43.

28. Hadrian, *Ep.* 2.43. Cf. 2.19–20 (quoting the interpolation); 2.37.31–32 ("Nequaquam sacras contempsit [Gregorius] imagines aliquando, sed magis constantissime observavit et eorum veneravit figuras"); 2.38 (letter to Januarius); 2.43.5–6 (to Januarius); 2.46.28–31 (interpolation).

29. Hadrian, *Ep.* 2.56.29–32; cf. 2.54–56. The section opens (54–55) by quoting what Hadrian claims is the last chapter heading in the *Capitulare,* though no such chapter appears in the completed *LC:* "Ultimum capitulum est, ut sciat domnus apostolicus et pater noster et cuncta simul Romanorum ecclesia, ut secundum quod continet in epistola beatissimi Gregorii, quam ad Serenum Masiliensem episcopum direxit, permittimus imagines sanctorum, quicumque eas formare voluerint, tam in ecclesia, quamque extra ecclesia propter amorem Dei et sanctorum eius. Adorare vero eas nequaquam cogimus, qui noluerint." As will be seen, the position suggested here—that the adoration of images should be avoided by those "who do not want" to engage in such practices—seems incompatible with the *LC* doctrine that good Christians always avoid image worship of any kind. Possibly the chapter heading reflects a line of thought about image worship that

circulated among Charlemagne's theologians but did not make its way into the *LC,* or possibly the heading was composed in Rome and inserted into Hadrian's letter to allow Charlemagne an opportunity to embrace a position closer to that of Rome, without seeming to abandon the *Capitulare* completely. Cf. Karl Hampe, "Hadrians I. Vertheidigung der zweiten nicaenischen Synode gegen die Angriffe Karls des Grossen," *Neues Archiv* 21 (1896): 85–113, at 89; Hadrian, *Ep.* 2.55n.1.

30. E.g., Hadrian, *Ep.* 2.15.34.

31. Hadrian, *Ep.* 2.56.3–7.

32. See above, notes 21, 22.

33. Hubert Bastgen, ed., *Libri Carolini sive Caroli Magni Capitulare de imaginibus, MGH Conc.* 2, suppl. (Hanover, 1924). A new edition is being prepared by Ann Freeman: *Opus Caroli regis contra synodum (Libri Carolini), MGH Conc.* 2, *Neuarbeitung.* My references to Bastgen's edition indicate the corresponding folio numbers in the two manuscripts that both Bastgen and Freeman use for their editions: Paris, Bib. de l'Arsenal, MS 663 (= A), and Theodulf's autograph copy, Vatican City, Bib. Vat., MS Latinus 7207 (= V). Readers may thus refer to either edition, once Freeman's edition is available, since both indicate folio numbers. See Freeman, "Carolingian Orthodoxy," passim, citing earlier literature on the *LC,* including her own extensive work on the treatise, much of it devoted (successfully) to proving that Theodulf of Orléans wrote the initial draft. On the doctrine of the *LC,* see also Celia Chazelle, "Matter, Spirit, and Image in the *Libri Carolini,*" *RechA* 21 (1986): 163–84; Chazelle, "Images, Scripture, the Church, and the *Libri Carolini,*" *Proceedings of the PMR Conference* 16/17 (1993): 53–76; Chazelle, "'Not in Painting But in Writing': Augustine and the Supremacy of the Word in the *Libri Carolini,*" in *Reading and Wisdom: The* De doctrina christiana *of Augustine in the Middle Ages,* ed. Edward D. English (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995), 1–22.

34. "Quod contra beati Gregorii instituta sit imagines adorare seu frangere et quia vetus et novum testamentum et poene omnes precipui doctores ecclesiae consentiunt beato Gregorio in non adorandis imaginibus, nec ut aliquid preter Deum omnipotentem adorare debeamus, in multis locis confirmat sanctus Gregorius papa" (Hadrian, *Ep.* 2.37).

35. Ann Freeman, "Additions and Corrections to the *Libri Carolini:* Links with Alcuin and the Adoptionist Controversy," in *Scire litteras: Forschungen zum mittelalterlichen Geistesleben,* ed. Sigrid Krämer and Michael Bernhard (Munich, 1988), 159–69.

36. *LC,* ed. Bastgen, 81–82 (V, fols. 88v–89v).

37. Freeman, "Carolingian Orthodoxy," 90–92.

38. *LC* 2.23 (ed. Bastgen, 82; V, fol. 88v). Adoration is owed to God alone and veneration to the saints, but neither to images: e.g., *LC* Praef. (ed. Bastgen, 6; A, fols. 5v–6); see also *LC* 3.15 (ed. Bastgen, 136.9–15; V, fol. 152v), where it is noted that some people worship images because they are overcome with joy at the likenesses of those they love (the saints and Christ), and that this is not idolatry; yet "reverentiores tamen et districtiores hanc consuetudinem perhorrent christiani." Cf. *LC* 3.6 (ed. Bastgen, 118–19; V, fols. 131v–32); 3.11 (ed. Bastgen, 124.14–15; V, fol. 138v). See also Chazelle, "Matter, Spirit, and Image," 165.

39. On the significance of the faulty Latin translation of Nicaea II available to the Carolingians, see Stephen Gero, "The *Libri Carolini* and the Image Controversy," *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 18 (1973): 7–34, at 10–11; Gert Händler, *Epochen karolingischer Theologie: Eine Untersuchung über die karolingischen Gutachten zum byzantinischen Bilderstreit* (Berlin, 1958), 67–73.

40. Chazelle, "Images, Scripture, the Church."

41. John Cavadini, "Claudius of Turin and the Augustinian Tradition," *Proceedings of the PMR Conference* 11 (1986): 43–50, especially 47. On Theodulf's background, see Ann Freeman, "Further Studies in the *Libri Carolini,* I and II," *Speculum* 40 (1965): 203–89, at 274–78.

42. Discussed further in Chazelle, "Images."

43. "[Q]ui nos viam regiam tenere instituit, imagines in ornamentis ecclesiarum et memoria rerum gestarum habentes et solum Deum adorantes et eius sanctis opportunam venerationem exhibentes" (*LC* Praef.; ed. Bastgen, 5–6; A, fols. 5v–6). Cf. *LC* 1.9 (ed. Bastgen, 27–28; V, fols. 25v–26); 2.25 (ed. Bastgen, 84–85; V, fols. 90v–92v); Praef. (ed. Bastgen, 3 [vs. iconoclasm]; A, fol. 3).

44. Cf. *LC* 1.9 (ed. Bastgen, 26; V, fol. 24); 3.15 (ed. Bastgen, 135; V, fol. 151r–v). On Scripture as the repository of sacred truth, see *LC* 2.30 (ed. Bastgen, 92–100; V, fol. 101–10v). On the contrast between artistic images and the few things, in addition to Scripture, that the Bible reveals are specially blessed by God, see, e.g., *LC* 1.15 (ed. Bastgen, 34–37 [Ark]; V, fols. 34–37); 1.20 (ed. Bastgen, 45–48 [Ark]; V, fols. 47v–51); 2.27–29 (ed. Bastgen, 87–92 [Eucharist, Cross, holy vessels]; V, fols. 94v–100v); 3.24 (ed. Bastgen, 153–55 [saints' relics]; V, fols. 173v–75v). Cf. Chazelle, "Matter, Spirit, and Image," 165–70.

45. *LC* 2.23 (ed. Bastgen, 82.13; V, fol. 88v). Cf., e.g., *LC* Praef. (ed. Bastgen, 6; A, fol. 5v); 1.9 (ed. Bastgen, 29; V, fol. 27); 2.26 (ed. Bastgen, 85; V, fol. 93); 4.19 (ed. Bastgen, 209; A, fol. 223r–v); 3.15 (ed. Bastgen, 136; V, fol. 152v), suggesting that the memory images stir may be joined with love for the images' subjects.

46. I argue this more fully in Chazelle, "Images, Scripture, the Church." Cf. *LC* 1.8 (ed. Bastgen, 25–26; V, fols. 22v–23v); 3.16 (ed. Bastgen, 137; V, fol. 154r–v). An image cannot depict such invisible qualities as wisdom and eloquence: *LC* 1.17 (ed. Bastgen, 41–42; V, fols. 42–43).

47. Thus, many things mentioned in Scripture cannot be depicted: see, e.g., *LC* 1.17 (ed. Bastgen, 41–42; V, fols. 42–43). Written letters are noted to be signs in *LC* 2.30 (ed. Bastgen, 93.8–9; V, fols. 101v–2).

48. *LC* 2.30 (ed. Bastgen, 92–100; V, fols. 101–10v).

49. See, e.g., *LC* 4.15 (ed. Bastgen, 201 [concerning a statue erected by the woman with an issue of blood]; A, fol. 214r–v); and 2.13 (ed. Bastgen, 73; V, fols. 79–80): if Pope Sylvester ordered Constantine to adore the images that the pope showed the emperor, it could only have been in order to help him reach the level of mature Christians, who have abandoned "the milk of infants" for "solid food." Cf. *LC* 3.15 (ed. Bastgen, 136.12–15; V, fol. 152v).

50. Freeman, "Carolingian Orthodoxy," especially 96–99.

51. As pointed out to me by Thomas Noble (personal communication).

52. Freeman, "Carolingian Orthodoxy," 65–66, 96–99.

53. *Concilium Parisiense. 825, MGH Concilia* 2.1, 473–551. Discussed in Freeman, "Carolingian Orthodoxy," 100–105; Wilfried Hartmann, *Die Synoden der Karolingerzeit im Frankenreich und in Italien* (Paderborn, 1987), 168–71; Egon Boshof, *Erzbischof Agobard von Lyon: Leben und Werk* (Cologne, 1969), 140–43; Händler, *Epochen karolingischer Theologie,* 102–38, cf. 43–55.

54. Hartmann, *Synoden,* 169.

55. *Conc. Paris.,* 475–80, at 478–79; translated in Freeman, "Carolingian Orthodoxy," 100.

56. *Conc. Paris.,* 480–532.

57. See the introduction to the libellus, *Conc. Paris.,* 481, and 484–502. The libellus also criticizes Hadrian I for his support of Nicaea II, though it diplomatically suggests that the pope erred only out of ignorance rather than knowingly, since he professed to follow Gregory (ibid., 482.1–6).

58. *Ep.* 11[10].874.32; *Conc. Paris.,* 487–89, 507, 527–28; cf. 531. 23–29.

59. *Conc. Paris.,* 483–84 (images assist memory and love "sicut a beatissimo Gregorio satis catholice perspicueque dictum declaratur"), 487.5–7 (images assist memory and compunction), 499.13–14 (images aid memory and love), 526.6–12 (images teach, assist memory, and decorate), 531.30–33 (images teach and aid memory); cf. 529.7–10.

60. See *Conc. Paris.,* 489.18, 490.26, 507.6–8, 527.7, 531.24–25, 532.13–14.

61. *Conc. Paris.,* 481.14–17 (denouncing Hadrian and Nicaea II for the doctrine that images should be adored and called holy), 489.18–20 (against the belief that images are holy and sanctify Christians), 493. 12–15 (images cannot mediate between earth and heaven), 500.18–19 ("Contra illos etiam, qui imagines adorare se profitentur, quia sacra ab illis nuncupantur et sacris vasis eas aequiperant"), 524–26.

62. See *Conc. Paris.,* 494.14–16, 497.20–29.

63. *Conc. Paris.,* 502–6. Images are also inferior to sacred vessels and the cherubim of the Ark of the Covenant: ibid., 500. The *LC* discuss the cross's sanctity: *LC* 2.28 (ed. Bastgen, 89–91; V, fols. 97v–99v); 1.23 (ed. Bastgen, 51–52; V, fol. 55–55v); 4.16 (ed. Bastgen, 203–5; A, fol. 216–16v). They seem to deny, however, that manufactured crosses share this quality: *LC* 1.19 (ed. Bastgen, 44; V, fols. 45v–46).

64. *Conc. Paris.,* 506. The passage alludes to the three rites of the *Inventio crucis, Exaltatio crucis,* and the Good Friday *Adoratio crucis.* On the origin and development of the last, see Gerhard Römer, "Die Liturgie des Karfreitags," *Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie* 77 (1955): 39–93, especially 70–86.

65. *Conc. Paris.,* 507.6–7).

66. *Conc. Paris.,* 507–8.

67. *Conc. Paris.,* e.g., 516, 519 (Augustine).

68. *Conc. Paris.,* 514 (Leontius of Neapolis), 515 (Augustine).

69. *Conc. Paris.,* e.g., 510 (Pope Gregory III), 511 (Pseudo-Basil, Athanasius), 511–12 (Stephen of Bostra), 514 (Leontius of Neapolis), 518 (Patriarch Germanus).

70. *Conc. Paris.,* 481–83.

71. *Conc. Paris.,* 528–29.

72. Daniel J. Sahas, *Icon and Logos: Sources in Eighth-Century Iconoclasm* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986), 24–44; Judith Herrin, *The Formation of Christendom* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), 307–89, 406–75.

73. *Conc. Paris.,* 483.

74. *Conc. Paris,* 535–51. Discussed in the text at note 93.

75. Claudius, *Ep.* 12.610–13 (*MGH, Epistolae,* 4); see Dungal, *Liber adversus Claudium Taurinensem* (*PL* 105:457–530, at 459–64); Boshof, *Erzbischoff Agobard von Lyon,* 144–47, 157; L. Van Acker, ed., *Agobard: Opera Omnia* (*CCCM* 52:xxix); Alain Boureau, "Les théologiens carolingiens devant les images religieuses: La conjoncture de 825," in *Nicée II, 787–1987: Douze siècles d'images religieuses,* ed. F. Boespflug and N. Lossky (Paris, 1987), 247–62, at 247. Although Dungal implies

that Claudius had caused trouble almost from his consecration, Dungal's treatise, the first surviving against Claudius, is internally dated to 827. Claudius's teachings were probably not an issue much before then: see *Adv. Claud.* (*PL* 105:468B–C). Jonas of Orléans cut short his work on a treatise against Claudius when the latter died unexpectedly: *De cultu imaginum libri tres* (*PL* 106:305–88, at 307A). It is unlikely that Claudius wrote the treatise ascribed in the *PL* and *CCCM* to Agobard of Lyons (*Liber contra eorum superstitionem* [*PL* 104:199–228]; *De picturis et imaginibus,* ed. L. Van Acker [*CCCM* 52:149–81]; henceforth cited from the *CCCM* edition as *De picturis*), as proposed by Paulino Bellet, "El liber de imaginibus sanctorum bajo el nombre de Agobardo de Lyon obra de Claudio de Turin," *Annalecta sacra Tarraconensia (Barcelona)* 26 (1953): 151–94. Against Bellet's thesis, see especially Boshof, *Agobard,* 147–57; Acker, *CCCM* 52:xxiv–xxxiii; cf. Boureau, "Les théologiens carolingiens," 256–57. One indication of different authorship is that Agobard's treatise attributes holiness to relics and crosses, and the intercessory ability to the saints, ideas Claudius seems to reject: Agobard, *De picturis* 10.160–11.161, 19.168; Acker, *CCCM* 52:xxxi; Boshof, *Agobard,* 150, 154–55.

76. Claudius, *Ep.* 12.610.

77. Against the worship of artistic images, Claudius, *Ep.* 12.610–11; on crosses, 611–12; on pilgrimages to Rome, 612; on the cult of relics and his disbelief in the intercession of the saints and, possibly, in papal authority, 613.

78. On the Second Commandment, Claudius, *Ep.* 12.610. Claudius's general suspicion of material things is suggested by his comments on crosses and relics as well as on images (12.611–13).

79. "Sed dicunt isti falsae religionis atque superstitionis cultores: 'Nos ob recordationem salvatoris nostri crucem pictam atque in eius honore imaginatam colimus, veneramur atque adoramus'. Quibus nihil aliud placet in salvatore nostro, nisi quod et impiis placuit: obprobrium passionis et inrisio mortis" (Claudius, *Ep.* 12.611).

80. See above, notes 37, 43.

81. Jonas, *De cultu* (*PL* 106:305–6). Cf. Boureau, "Les théologiens carolingiens," 257; Edward James Martin, *A History of the Iconoclastic Controversy* (London, 1930), 263–64, on Claudius's relationship with Felix of Urgel.

82. Cf. Cavadini, "Claudius," passim, discussing the Augustinianism, conceivably Spanish, of Claudius's thought.

83. Claudius, *Ep.* 12.610; Dungal, *Adv. Claud.* (*PL* 105:465–66). This part of Dungal's treatise is also printed in *MGH, Epistolae,* 4:583–85, see 583–84.

84. Above, note 74.

85. *Conc. Paris.*, 483.18–25. See Boshof, *Agobard*, 156–57; Acker, *CCCM* 52:xxix.

86. Agobard, *De picturis*, 20.168–21.171; Bede, *De templo* 2 (*CCCM* 119A:212–13). See Meyvaert, "Bede and the Church Paintings," especially 68–69. Meyvaert translates Bede's text.

87. Agobard, *De picturis*, 22.171–72: "Foroiuliensem etiam episcopum beatus papa Gregorius arguisse legitur, ideo quod imagines apostolorum de sua basilica eraserit ob superstitionem uulgi eas contra regulam fidei adorantis, ac non potius rationabili auctoritate eiusmodi errorem correxit, pictura inlesa ad posterorum memoriam permanente."

88. See Cavadini, "Claudius," 50n.52. Cf. Boshof, *Agobard*, 150–51.

89. The first seven sources come from Augustine, followed by two passages from Gregory and four from Augustine: Agobard, *De picturis*, 1.151–9.159. Augustine, especially *De civitate Dei*, is the main source in the rest of the treatise. Agobard's dependence on Augustine to support the notion that Christians must abandon the material world to approach the spiritual emerges especially in the following comment: "Nemo igitur sapientum ignorat, quod homo fidelis, ut profitiat, ab exterioribus introrsus traendus est, non ab interioribus exterius proiciendus, ut defitiat. Transire enim debet de carne ad animam, de corpore ad spiritum, de uisibilibus ad inuisibilia, de mundo ad Deum. Et iste dicitur profectus, si ad meliora quis transeat, non ad deteriora. Melius uero esse animum, deterius corpus, eminentius spiritum, infimam carnem, nouit qui ea, que paulo superius sunt posita sancti Augustini uerba legit et intellegit" (Agobard, *De picturis* 16.165). See also, using excerpts from Augustine, 24.172–74 (God is venerated more chastely without images); 25.174–75 (nothing impedes reception of the truth more than libidiny and false images of sensible things); 26.175 (it is wrong to usurp anything divine for sacrilegious rites).

90. Agobard, *De picturis* 33.180: "nullum ab imaginibus, quas aspicimus, auxilium sperare debemus, quia nec male possunt facere, nec bene. Recte nimirum ob huiusmodi euacuandam superstitionem ab orthodoxis patribus definitum est, 'picturas in ecclesia fieri non debere, nec quod colitur et adoratur, in parietibus depingatur'." Cf. 3.154 (nothing can mediate between God and man except him who is both God and man); 15.164 (visible things are harmful for seeking invisible things, and love of corporal things impedes contemplation of the spiritual); 19.168 and 31.179 (to worship images is idolatry).

91. Agobard, *De picturis* 23.172.

92. Agobard, *De picturis* 23.172, 19.168, 31.179.

93. *Conc. Paris.*, 535–51.

94. *Conc. Paris.*, 536–39 (against iconoclasm), 540–49 (against the "undue worship" of images); cf. 541.20–21.

95. E.g., *Conc. Paris.*, 536.25–26 (images demonstrate love and respect), 537.12–13 (images help memory), 549.4–6 (images aid love and are decorative).

96. *Conc. Paris.*, 540.34–35, 541.9–10, 547.1–9.

97. *Conc. Paris.*, 549–50.

98. *Conc. Paris.*, 539.

99. *Conc. Paris.*, 539–40.

100. The two bishops also altered a statement from the libellus referring to Gregory's teachings. Where the libellus declares that discretion should be maintained toward images, "sicut eximius doctor beatus papa Gregorius docuit et in suis scriptis nobis tenendum sequendumque reliquit," the epitome states that discretion should be preserved, "sicut eximius doctor beatus papa Gregorius sermonem Massiliensi episcopo scribens et in eisdem scriptis tenendum sequendumque reliquit" (*Conc. Paris.*, 497.26–29 [libellus], 547.6–9 [epitome]).

101. Jonas, *De cultu* (*PL* 106:306–10).

102. Jonas, *De cultu* (*PL* 106:310D–11A; see also 332B–C).

103. Jonas, *De cultu* (*PL* 106:318A–C).

104. Jonas, *De cultu* (*PL* 106:326A–B; see also 329D–30A).

105. Jonas, *De cultu* (*PL* 106:325C–D). Cf. Claudius, *Ep.* 12.610–11.

106. Jonas, *De cultu* (*PL* 106:332C–D).

107. Dungal, *Adv. Claud.* (*PL* 105:472B).

108. Dungal, *Adv. Claud.* (*PL* 105:468–69).

109. Dungal, *Adv. Claud.* (*PL* 105:465B).

110. Dungal, *Adv. Claud.* (*PL* 105:471A–B).

111. Dungal, *Adv. Claud.* (*PL* 105:467D–68A, 470D, 471C).

112. Dungal, *Adv. Claud.* (*PL* 105:472B).

113. Dungal, *Adv. Claud.* (*PL* 105:527D, 467D–68A, 472A–B).

114. Walafrid, *Libellus de exordiis et incrementis quarundam in observationibus ecclesiasticis rerum, MGH Legum sectio 2, Capitularia regum Francorum*, 2.473–516, 473 on the treatise's date.

115. Walafrid, *De exordiis* 482–83.

116. Walafrid, *De exordiis* 483.4–9.

117. Walafrid, *De exordiis* 482.6–20.

118. Walafrid, *De exordiis* 484.12–14; cf. 483.9–10.

119. Walafrid, *De exordiis* 482.18–20 (images stir memory and love); cf. 483.35–36 (images encourage devotion and love of "invisible things"); 484.1–3 (images are literature for the illiterate).

120. Walafrid, *De exordiis* 484.5–8.

121. Walafrid, *De exordiis* 482.4, 23; 484.14. Iconodules venerate images "beyond what is acceptable [easdem imagines ultra, quam satis est, venerantur]" (482.31–35).

122. Walafrid, *De exordiis* 483.28–29.

123. Hincmar of Reims, *Opusculum LV capitulorum* (*PL* 126:282–494, at 389C–90A).

124. Hincmar, *LV capit.* (*PL* 126:360–61).

125. Freeman, "Carolingian Orthodoxy," 66, 96.

126. Hincmar, *LV capit.* (*PL* 126:360A). Translated in Freeman, "Carolingian Orthodoxy," 68, cf. 66–67. Hincmar diplomatically avoids any discussion of the papacy's acceptance of Nicaea II.

127. Possibly Hincmar confuses the iconoclastic council of 754 with the iconodulist Nicaea II: Freeman, "Carolingian Orthodoxy," 68.

128. Hincmar, *LV capit.* (*PL* 126:389C–D).

129. "[E]x verbis sanctorum, quasi ex eorum imaginibus, ipsos, videlicet corda et promulgationes eorum, cognoscere possumus" (Hincmar, *LV capit.; PL* 126:389D–90A).

130. Flodoard, *Historia ecclesiae Remensis* (*PL* 135:23–328, at 260A).

131. Terms from Richard Sullivan, "The Carolingian Age: Reflections on Its Place in the History of the Middle Ages," *Speculum* 64 (1989): 267–306, especially 272–78, with extensive footnotes citing the relevant scholarly literature.

132. Ibid., 287–97, especially 297: "Cultural plurality of a deep and pervasive nature seems much more characteristic of the period than does cultural unity and uniformity."

11

E. ANN MATTER

Gregory the Great in the Twelfth Century: The Glossa Ordinaria

The massive collection of biblical commentary known as the *Glossa ordinaria* remains one of the largest undigested bits of medieval Christian writing, even though scholars are becoming more aware of its importance in the later Middle Ages and more committed to continuing research on its origin, development, and use. Building on the work of Beryl Smalley, Margaret Gibson has analyzed the manuscript evidence for the text of the Gloss and has given some important indications for further study.[1] In the most significant advance in the study of the *Glossa ordinaria* in decades, Karlfried Froehlich and Margaret Gibson have edited a facsimile reprint of the *editio princeps,* published by Adolph Rusch in Strassburg in 1480.[2] This is not, of course, a critical edition, nor is it a medieval version of the Gloss. Nor is this edition very easy to use, since it appears in a gothic typeface and without verse numberings or any sort of apparatus. But it does at least make widely available the printed edition Gibson has shown to be closest to the medieval manuscript tradition.[3] This facsimile does a great service to *Glossa ordinaria* scholarship in providing an alternative to the mutilated printing by J. P. Migne under the works of Walafrid Strabo in *Patrologia latina.*[4]

The *Glossa ordinaria* is, in a certain sense, one of the best-known texts of medieval Latin Christian culture. We tend to talk about it as an old friend; we all know that it was the "standard" commentary of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, quoted by

scholastic authors, such as Thomas Aquinas, and by poets and secular writers, such as Dante and Chaucer, even though it has never been the subject of an exhaustive manuscript study or a critical edition. There are still many mysteries surrounding the Gloss, but the mist is beginning to clear. I shall offer here a few general statements about the character and development of the *Glossa ordinaria* in order to set a context for my discussion of Gregory the Great in the Gloss. Everything I say is the result of recent scholarship, much of which contradicts some of the long-held assumptions about the Gloss.

First of all, the *Glossa ordinaria* is not a unified text. Recent manuscript studies have shown that it is never copied in a complete collection, but is instead found in various codices. For example, one codex may contain the five books of Moses, another the books of Tobit, Esther, Judith, and Ruth (which seems to have been a collection of favorite Bible stories), another the books of Solomon, another the Psalms. In the Christian canon, one codex might contain the *Glossa ordinaria* on the Gospels, another the letters of Paul, another, the Catholic Epistles. There is not a tradition of copying out an entire *Glossa ordinaria* until the age of printing.[5]

This suggests that there was not a single author of the *Glossa ordinaria.* Instead, it seems that the glosses to different parts of the Bible developed independently, but as part of a tradition of glossed books going back to Carolingian scriptoria, such as Fulda, Saint Gall, Reichenau, and Tegernsee.[6] This specific tradition of glossing presents the main text, copied in a large hand, in the center of the page, surrounded by marginal and interlinear commentary in a smaller hand. As Smalley suggested long ago, this convention for the presentation of commentary may have been related to the glossing of legal collections, such as the *Corpus iuris civilis* of Justinian, which began in the eleventh century in northern Italy.[7] Glossing was not limited to the Latin literary world; we know of early medieval Greek glossed manuscripts, and there are Arabic glossed manuscripts from at least the eleventh century, though the practice of glossing does not seem to have become a convention in Jewish commentary until the age of printing.[8]

The *Glossa ordinaria* is, then, part of a widespread medieval tradition of commentary. It is also, at least for most books of the Bible, an identifiable entity: we can speak with some confidence

about "the" *Glossa ordinaria* to most books of the Bible. I qualify this statement only because recent manuscript study has revealed more than one glossed version of some books of the Bible, notably the Apocalypse, which is represented by at least two separate glossed texts, with an uncertain relationship to what may be yet a third gloss, that listed by Stegmüller.[9] For most books of the Bible, however, the situation is much clearer. By the year 1160 it would have been possible to enter the store of a Parisian bookseller and emerge with "the" Gloss to almost any book of the Bible.

One final point: we now understand that the interlinear Gloss to any given book of the Bible came to assume a characteristic form at roughly the same time as the marginal Gloss, refuting what Smalley termed the "bibliographical legend" that the interlinear Gloss was ascribed to Anselm of Laon and the marginal Gloss to Walafrid Strabo.[10] All *Glossa ordinaria* manuscripts were laid out to incorporate both the interlinear and the marginal glosses, and there is more fluidity between marginal and interlinear glosses than has been thought, which suggests that both marginal and interlinear glosses were redacted at the same time, even if they do not contain the same material.

In this essay I will focus on the material of the marginal glosses, for two interconnected reasons. First and most obvious, these glosses are longer and more complex than the interlinear glosses; second, because of this, they contain much recycled material. In fact, the marginal glosses can often be shown to be made up almost entirely of earlier sources, sometimes already condensed by a Carolingian author, condensed once again into a twelfth-century version of the same interpretation. Gibson has shown how the abbreviations of Jerome's commentaries on Isaiah and Jeremiah by Josephus Scotus, a pupil of Alcuin; the concise versions of Jerome's commentaries by Hrabanus Maurus; and the tenth-century glosses of Otfrid of Weissenberg all had a part in shaping the *Glossa ordinaria* on these prophetic books.[11]

The *Glossa ordinaria,* then, is an index of the reception of early Christian authors through various levels of authoritative use, ending in a twelfth-century, easy-reference version of highlights from the most highly respected sources. The figure of Gregory the Great inevitably looms large in such a collection. As might be expected, Gregory is cited in the *Glossa ordinaria* to books of the Bible on

which he wrote commentaries and homilies: Job, parts of Ezekiel, the beginning of the Song of Songs, and 1 Kings (=1 Sam.). But these are not the only instances of Gregory's influence in the *Glossa ordinaria.* A general survey of quotations from Gregory across the entire scope of the glossed Bible presents some interesting comparisons and contrasts.

In 1965 René Wasselynck published a study of the influence of the exegesis of Gregory the Great in the Middle Ages, which includes a section on Gregory's presence in the *Glossa ordinaria.* Wasselynck's study uses the *PL* edition of the Gloss but is nevertheless a good beginning for a similar survey taking advantage of the superior tools of contemporary *Glossa ordinaria* scholarship. Wasselynck showed that Gregory was widely quoted in the Gloss to books of the Bible on which he had written no independent treatise, such as Genesis.[12] What's more, Wasselynck was able to demonstrate that the citations from Gregory in the *Glossa ordinaria* to Genesis came from a ready-made anthology of writings of Gregory, the *Liber testimoniorum* of Gregory's contemporary, the apostolic notary Paterius.[13] This discovery brings us to a parenthetical consideration of the widespread later medieval knowledge of Gregory through florilegia and compendia.

Paterius compiled a reference work to Gregory's comments on passages of many books of the Bible (but notably excluding Job) found in the *Moralia in Job* and in Gregory's homilies on Ezekiel and on the Gospels. Because the *Liber testimoniorum* was arranged in the order of the books of the Bible, it formed, as Wasselynck put it in another study, "a valuable dictionary of easy consultation for theologians."[14] Only the first part of the compendium published under the name of Paterius in *PL* 79 dates from the seventh century, including selections from Gregory on the Pentateuch, the books of Kings, Judges, Psalms, Proverbs, and Song of Songs; the final two sections, covering the prophets and the New Testament, are a continuation of Paterius dating from the twelfth century.[15] As Wasselynck has noted, the twelfth century was the high point of production of compilations from Gregory: besides this addition to Paterius, there are extant similar works by Alulfe of Tournai and by a monk (perhaps of Clairvaux) named Bruno, as well as an anonymous compilation from Mont Saint-Michel.[16]

This type of exegetical compendium seems to have been the most common and influential form of later medieval compilation from the works of Gregory the Great, but it was not the only one. We also know of extracts arranged by dogmatic subject matter, such as the seventh-century *Sententiae* of Taio of Saragossa, the unpublished tenth-century *Flores ex moralibus* of Adalbert of Metz, and the twelfth-century *Remediarum conversorum* of Peter of London.[17] There is also a tradition of abbreviations of Gregory's *Moralia,* such as the seventh-century *Egloga* of the Irish monk Lathcen and the tenth-century *Epitome Moralium* of Odo of Cluny.[18] The presence of Gregory the Great in the *Glossa ordinaria,* then, forms part of an established tradition of excerpting and revising Gregory that reached a climax in the twelfth century.

To return to specific examples in the Gloss, the influence of the compendium of Paterius is especially clear. There are numerous "Gregorian" citations from Paterius in all the *Glossa ordinaria* to the Pentateuch, where the appearance of Gregory is in close conformity to the selections of Paterius on Joshua, Judges, and Ruth. For example, Paterius compiled only two references to Joshua and eight to Judges, and these are the only citations from Gregory in the *Glossa ordinaria* to these books.[19] Gregory's appearance in the *Glossa ordinaria* closely parallels Paterius. The argument can even be made from silence: for example, Paterius does not include excerpts from the book of Ruth, nor are there any Gregory citations in the Gloss to Ruth. Furthermore, the use of Paterius in the *Glossa ordinaria* supports the argument that only the first part of the *Liber testimoniorum* is original to Paterius. Gilbert of Auxerre (called "the Universal") is thought to have compiled the *Glossa ordinaria* to both Genesis and Isaiah; it is striking that Paterius's collection of Gregorian interpretations was used for the Gloss on Genesis, but not for the Gloss on Isaiah. Evidently, Gilbert's copy of Paterius did not include the twelfth-century additions.[20]

Although Paterius's work is an important clue to Gregory's presence in the *Glossa ordinaria,* it is not the only clue or even an easy one. Sometimes Gregory via Paterius appears in yet another intermediary stage, such as the citations in the Gloss to 1 Kings, which appear under the name of Hrabanus Maurus, even though these passages are not taken up by Hrabanus.[21] Gregory's commentary on 1 Kings, only recently accepted as authentic,[22] can be seen remotely

in the Gloss, probably mediated through a Carolingian compiler, such as the ubiquitous Hrabanus.[23]

Gregory's presence in the *Glossa ordinaria* to the Song of Songs provides yet another interesting example of the complexity of his use in the twelfth century. The Gloss to the Song of Songs is no catena of earlier sources; its use of authors from previous centuries is extremely subtle. Often passages can be traced to a given source by comparison of ideas, even though the words themselves have been extensively reworked. But in spite of the relative opacity of the sources to the Gloss to the Song of Songs, the most important line of interpretation for this text closely follows that of Gregory the Great. Twelve references to Gregory are marked in the glosses to the Rusch edition of the *Glossa ordinaria,* and another five places where Gregory is cited appear without a reference, although they are noted in the 1617/*PL* edition. Gregory's concern for the purity of the Church on Earth, beset by temptation and affliction, is the obvious interpretation the *Glossa ordinaria* offers for the Song of Songs.

Furthermore, there is a close (though rarely exact) correspondence between the quotations from Gregory in the *Glossa ordinaria* and the lengthy citations from the Song of Songs in the compendium of Paterius. Thus, the gloss to Song of Songs 1.5, "Posuerunt me custodem in vineis" (from Gregory's homily 17 on the Gospels), and the gloss to Song of Songs 3.1, "in lectulo meo" (from Gregory's homilies on Ezekiel), are both taken from Paterius.[24] Not every passage quoting the Song of Songs in Paterius makes it into the *Glossa ordinaria,* but up to Song of Songs 3.1, this is a major source, along with the homilies of Origen of Alexandria and the commentaries of the Venerable Bede and the Carolingian exegete Angelomus of Luxeuil.

From the beginning of the third chapter to the end, the *Glossa ordinaria* on the Song of Songs bears closest resemblance to another intermediate source of "Gregorian" character: the commentary of Robert of Tombelaine. This eleventh-century commentary is printed in the *PL* in two parts: from Song of Songs 1.1 to 1.11 under Robert's own name, and from Song of Songs 1.12 to the end as a continuation of the fragmentary commentary on the Song of Songs of Gregory the Great.[25] Robert's interpretation of the Song of Songs follows closely Gregory's concern for the purity of the

Church beset by worldly corruption. It is striking that Gregory's own commentary on the Song of Songs, which was incomplete but quite well known,[26] is not directly cited in the *Glossa ordinaria,* in spite of the overall "Gregorian" tenor of this part of the *Glossa.*

Finally, let us turn in the *Glossa ordinaria* to the two books of the Bible most intimately associated with Gregory in the Middle Ages: Ezekiel and Job. In the case of these books, where Gregory was a crucial authority (indeed, for Job practically the only authority), it is not surprising to find a closer correspondence between Gregory's works and the *Glossa ordinaria.* For example, Gregory's homily 2, on Ezekiel 40.4–5 (the vision of a man who measures a wall and a house with a line of flax and a measuring reed), is followed rather closely in the *Glossa ordinaria* to this chapter.[27] Here, however, the nature of Gregory's exegesis of Ezekiel limits its impact on the *Glossa,* for Gregory did not write a commentary on the entire book of Ezekiel, but rather wrote twelve homilies on chapter 1 of Ezekiel and ten homilies on chapter 40. The *Glossa ordinaria* to Ezekiel, therefore, can make direct use of Gregory in only a few places.

The case of the Book of Job is yet another story. Obviously, here the compiler of the *Glossa ordinaria* had plenty of Gregory to choose from—almost too much. And in this case, the early medieval compilations proved of limited use. Paterius did not include Job in the *Liber testimoniorum,* so the most popular compendium does not provide any assistance. Did the *Egloga* of Lathcen play a part in the *Glossa ordinaria* to Job? An attempt to answer this question led me into some reflections on the nature of medieval use of sources and suggested a few things about the changing tastes of biblical compilers over the centuries of the Middle Ages.

On the one hand, Lathcen's *Egloga* could easily have been a part of the Gloss to Job; the gloss marked *allegorice* at Job 1.1, for example, is very close to Lathcen's quotation *iuxta allegoriam* from Gregory on this verse.[28] Furthermore, there are extant manuscripts of Lathcen from Laon, one dating from the eighth–ninth century, the other from the thirteenth, suggesting that this treatise was known and used throughout the Middle Ages in the area of the development of the *Glossa ordinaria.*[29] On the other hand, the Gloss to Job can easily be shown to have a close correspondence to the *Moralia* directly. The example I just gave could have come directly from the

Moralia as easily as from Lathcen; indeed, I could find nothing to show that it did not.[30] In fact, the overwhelming tenor of the *Glossa ordinaria* to Job suggests that it was not taken from Lathcen. The Gloss is primarily concerned with the moral interpretation of the story of Job, consistently placing Gregory's last way of reading the story first, while Lathcen in his compendium completely ignored the moral sense, giving only the literal and the allegorical. Certainly the compiler of the *Glossa ordinaria* to Job had a complete text of Gregory's *Moralia* before him. He may also have had a copy of Lathcen to consult, but he did not need to do so. Everything he needed was in the original, and the interpretations that most drew him were not to be found in the compendium.

This suggests a limit to the conclusion about the use of Gregory the Great in the *Glossa ordinaria* to which this essay seems to be heading—that is, that Gregory mostly appears in the *Glossa ordinaria* from well-known intermediate sources. Although this may have been the case for many, or even most, of the books of the Bible, it was not universally true, especially for the book of Job. The redactors of the *Glossa ordinaria* were wide-ranging and resourceful in their use of sources. More than anything, they knew where to get the interpretation they wanted, the interpretation that would best serve as a standard guide to the received reading of a given biblical verse in the context of the general understanding of the book to which it belonged. The *Glossa ordinaria* did not provide new interpretations of the Bible, except in the way in which it wove together old interpretations. In this regard, the *Glossa ordinaria* seems an exceedingly conservative series of documents.

It is just for this reason—the overwhelmingly conservative nature of its exegesis—that the *Glossa ordinaria* provides an excellent mirror for the reception of Gregory the Great in the twelfth century. The most striking aspect of the image we see in this mirror is how much of Gregory has been refracted through other figures, especially Paterius. Yet we know really very little about these later medieval "translators" of Gregory. The work of several of his compilers remains only in manuscript, and even Paterius has never been thoroughly studied or critically edited. This study of the sources to the *Glossa ordinaria* suggests that there is still much preliminary work to be done before we can speak with confidence of the reception of Gregory the Great in the twelfth century.

NOTES

1. Margaret Gibson, "The Twelfth-Century Glossed Bible," *Studia patristica* 23 (1989): 232–44. Beryl Smalley's decades of work on the *Glossa ordinaria* are summarized in her *Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages,* 3rd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983). See also Smalley, "Gilbertus Universalis, Bishop of London (1128–34), and the Problem of the *Glossa ordinaria,*" *RTAM* 7 (1935): 247–61, and 8 (1936): 28–42.

2. Karlfried Froehlich and Margaret Gibson, eds., *Biblia Latina cum Glossa Ordinaria: Facsimile Reprint of the Editio Princeps Adolph Rusch of Strassburg 1480/81,* 4 vols. (Turnhout: Brepols, 1992).

3. Margaret Gibson, "The Glossed Bible," in *Biblia Latina,* ed. Froehlich and Gibson, 1:vii.

4. *PL* 113–14. Migne took this text from the 1617 Antwerp edition. Since he had decided that the *Glossa ordinaria* was a work of the Carolingian author Walafrid Strabo, Migne stripped all post–ninth-century glosses as accretions; see Karlfried Froehlich, "The Printed Gloss," in *Biblia Latina,* ed. Froehlich and Gibson, 1:xii–xxvi.

5. Gibson, "The Twelfth-Century Glossed Bible," 232–44.

6. Ibid., 233–36.

7. Hermann Kantorowicz, "Note on the Development of the Gloss to the Justinian and the Canon Law," in Smalley, *Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages,* 52–55.

8. For Greek glosses, see J. Schmid, "Glossen," in *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche,* 10 vols. (Freiburg: Herder, 1957–65), 4:968–70; for Arabic glosses, see F. Rosenthal, "Hashiya," in *The Encyclopedia of Islam,* new ed., 8 vols. to date (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1960–), 3:268–69. For Hebrew printed texts with marginal glosses, see Eliezer Berkovits et al., "Talmud, Babylonian," in *Encyclopedia Judaica,* 16 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1971–72), 15:764–66. I am grateful to Everett Rowson for information about Arabic manuscripts, and to Edward Breuer and Sol Cohen for advice on the Jewish commentary tradition.

9. Compare the Apocalypse glosses of Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, MS clm 3733 (Augsburg, twelfth century) to Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Auct. D.4.12 (S.C. 2096(2)) (France, thirteenth century); Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Auct. D.4.13 (S.C. 2571) (England, thirteenth century); and F. Stegmüller, *Repertorium Biblicum medii aevi,* vol. 9 (Madrid, 1975), No. 1 1853, pp. 554–55.

10. Smalley, *Study of the Bible,* 56. Helmut Riedlinger, *Die Makellosigkeit der Kirche in den Lateinischen Hoheliedkommentaren des Mittelalters* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1958), 125, attributes the interlinear gloss to the Song of Songs to the school of Anselm of Laon.

11. Gibson, "The Twelfth-Century Glossed Bible," 239, speaking of Isaiah; see also Gibson, "The Glossed Bible," in *Biblia Latina,* ed. Froehlich and Gibson, 1:vii–ix for Jeremiah.

12. René Wasselynck, "L'influence de l'exégèse de S. Grégoire le Grand sur les commentaires bibliques médiévaux (VIIe–XIIe s.)," *RTAM* 32 (1965): 157–204, especially 187–88 for Genesis.

13. Paterius, *Liber testimoniorum* (*PL* 79:682–1136).

14. "Le livre de Paterius forme de la sorte un dictionnaire de toute premiere valeur et de consultation facile pour les théologiens" (René Wasselynck, "Les compilations des 'Moralia in Job' du VIIe au XIIe siècle," *RTAM* 29 [1962]: 5–32, especially 5–9 for Paterius; quotation, 7).

15. André Wilmart, "Le recueil grégorien de Paterius et les manuscrits wisigothiques de Paris," *RvBén* 39 (1927): 81–104; Wasselynck, "Les compilations," 6–7; Wasselynck, "L'influence," 186.

16. Wasselynck, "Les compilations," 23–27; Alulfe, *De expositione Novi Testamenti* (*PL* 79:1137–1424).

17. Taio, *Sententiae* (*PL* 80:727–990; see Wasselynck, "Les compilations," 9–10); Adalbert of Metz, *Flores ex moralibus* dedicatory epistle (*PL* 136:1309–12; see Wasselynck, "Les compilations," 27–28); Peter of London, *Remediarum conversorum* (unedited text found in Paris, B.N., MS lat. 3227; see Wasselynck, "Les compilations," 28–31).

18. Lathcen, *Egloga,* ed. M. Adriaen (*CCSL* 145; see Wasselynck, "Les compilations," 11–14); Odo of Cluny, *Epitome Moralium* (*PL* 133:107–512; see Wasselynck, "Les compilations," 15–19).

19. Paterius on Joshua 1 (*PL* 79:783–85) = *Glossa ordinaria,* ed. Froehlich and Gibson, 1:457–58; Paterius on Joshua 2 (*PL* 79:785–86) = *Glossa ordinaria* 1:459; Paterius on Judges 1 (*PL* 79:785) = *Glossa ordinaria* 1:481; Paterius on Judges 2 (*PL* 79:785–88) = *Glossa ordinaria* 1:484–85; Paterius on Judges 3 (*PL* 79:788) = *Glossa ordinaria* 1:494; Paterius on Judges 4–7 (*PL* 79:788–90) = *Glossa ordinaria* 1:496–98; Paterius on Judges 8 (*PL* 79:790) = *Glossa ordinaria* 1:501.

20. Wasselynck, "L'influence," 191; for Gilbert, see Smalley, "Gilbertus."

21. Wasselynck, "L'influence," 189. Compare Hrabanus, *Commentaria in Libros IV Regum* (*PL* 109:15–16), to Paterius 7.1 (*PL* 79:789); and Hrabanus (*PL* 109:19–20) to Paterius 7.2 (*PL* 79:789–90).

22. Gregory the Great, *Expositione in Librum Primum Regum,* ed. P. Verbraken (*CCSL* 144). The authenticity of this treatise has been the subject of several scholarly articles: Patrick Verbraken, "Le texte du Commentaire sur les Rois attribué à saint Grégoire," *RvBén* 66 (1956): 39–62; Verbraken, "Le Commentaire de saint Grégoire sur le premier Livre des Rois," *RvBén* 66 (1956): 159–217; Paul Meyvaert, "A New

Edition of Gregory the Great's Commentaries on the Canticle and 1 Kings," *JThS* n.s. 19 (1968): 215–25; Paul Meyvaert, "The Date of Gregory the Great's Commentaries on the Canticle of Canticles and on 1 Kings," *Sacris Erudiri* 23 (1978–79): 191–216.

23. Compare Gregory, *Reg.* 1.2 (*CCSL* 144:60) to the *Glossa ordinaria* 2:3. Close comparison of Gregory, Hrabanus, and the Gloss to 1 Kings would probably give us a better sense of this transmission.

24. Song of Songs 1.5, *Glossa ordinaria* 2:709 = Paterius, *Liber testimoniorum* 13.3 (*PL* 79:905), from *Hom.Ev.* 1.17.14 (*PL* 76:1146A–47A). Song of Songs 3.1, *Glossa ordinaria* 2:713 = Paterius, *Liber testimoniorum* 13.17 (*PL* 79:908), from *Hom.Ez.* 2.7.11 (*CCSL* 142:324–25).

25. *PL* 150:1361–70 under the name of Robert of Tombelaine; *PL* 79:493–548 under the name of Gregory the Great. Gregory's commentary on the Song of Songs is edited by Patrick Verbraken in *CCSL* 144:1–46, and by R. Bélanger in *SC* 314. See Meyvaert, "A New Edition"; and Meyvaert, "The Date of Gregory the Great's Commentaries."

26. Matter, *Voice,* 92–97.

27. Compare the gloss beginning "spiritalia spiritaliter," *Glossa ordinaria* 3:295, to Gregory's *Hom.Ez.* 2.2.2 (*CCSL* 142:226); other glosses in this section are taken from adjacent passages in this homily.

28. *Glossa ordinaria* 2:375 = Lathcen, *Egloga* 1.11.15 (*CCSL* 145:3).

29. See the introduction of Adriaen, *CCSL* 145:vi.

30. Compare to Gregory the Great, *Mor.* 1.11.15 (*CCSL* 143:31–32).

A group of renowned North American scholars gathered at the University of Notre Dame in 1993 for a symposium on Pope Gregory the Great (550–604). This volume presents essays delivered at the conference, together with additional contributions. In these essays Gregory emerges as a figure both interpreting and interpreted: interpreting the past, receiving, synthesizing, and developing the teachings of earlier writers, and, by this very process, presenting a persuasive theological and pastoral agenda which has inspired projects of interpretation and development in later periods up to and including our own.

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University of Notre Dame Press
Notre Dame, IN 46556